VOLUME II, NUMBER 2 SPRING, 1935

CONTENTS

MARXISM AND THE "NEGRO QUESTION" ..... Page 1

THE APPLICATION OF DIALECTICAL MATERIAL ISM TO ART AND LITERATURE, Page 7
By August Thalheimer

AMERICAN LABOR TODAY—ITS PROBLEMS AND TASKS ..... Page 16

FOR COMMUNIST UNITY—Report on Unity Negotiations in Alsace ..... Page 23

MARX AND AMERICA ON THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT ..... Page 27

THE OCTOBER REVOLT IN SPAIN ..... Page 29

TRADE UNION WORK OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY ..... Page 30

COMMUNIST PARTY A. S. A. (OPPOSITION) CALLS FOR LABOR UNITY ..... Page 41

LINOLEUM CUTS BY FLORENTS ANDERSON PRINTED BY COOPERATIVE HELP

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The Road to Communism

VOLUME II, NUMBER 2 SPRING, 1935

Marxism and the "Negro Question"

Introduction.

Of all problems facing the American working class and the American Communist movement, the "Negro Question" is the most specifically American of all American questions, with only secondary analogies to conditions elsewhere. It is a question of first rate importance to the proletariat of this country. And yet of all questions it is the one to which the most serious attention on the part of Marxian theoreticians has been devoted. There has in fact not yet been made in America any serious analysis of the Negro question from the Marxist point of view. The general backwardness and sterility of revolutionary theory in America and the traditional American Socialist "Nihilism" on the "Negro Question" is an indirect expression of the "white supermacy" ideology ("There is no Negro Question!" "There is only an economic question of workers against bosses!") are partly responsible for this condition. And, although the Communist movement rapidly broke with the shameless white chauvinism of large sections of the pre-war socialist movement, the theoretical re-orientation has been much slower. Until a short time ago the Communist movement remained content with vague and platitudinous phrases, and when recently a new theoretical departure was attempted under the stimulus of the Communist International, it went astray as a result of a fundamental false orientation ("national minority" theory). A truly Marxist theory of the "Negro Question" and even a truly Marxist analysis of its main features still remains for the future.

At the same time distinct signs are not absent pointing to a definite revival of the independent social activity of the Negro masses in the North and in the South, in the urban and in the rural centers, under the stimulus of the economic crisis, the great growth in unemployment and the incredible chaos in the cotton economy of the South. In this situation the unsatisfactory state of current Communist theory on the "Negro Question" (especially in this country) is very serious and even dangerous.

The Status of the American Negro

The status of the Negro in the United States is in a very real sense specific to this country; only in the most general sense does it bear any relation to the status of colored people in other parts of the world, in the West Indies, in Africa, in South America, etc. Only against the background of the special course of American historical development, only in connection with the concrete relation of social forces in this country, can the status of the American Negro be understood and the problem deriving therefrom appreciated.

The negro people in the United States do not constitute a colonial people under the heel of American imperialism. All of the essential characteristics of a colony (geographical separation from metropolis, the distinctness of the national economy of the colony and its specifc relation to the imperialist economy of the metropolis, etc) are absent. But just as little do the Negro people constitute a national minority in the real sense of the term. For the formation of a nation there is necessary a community (and distinctness) of language, of territory, of economic life (a national economy of psychic structure (culture) and tradition. Not a single one of these conditions is characteristic of the Negroes in the United States.

The attempt to supply the necessary community of territory by the creation of a fictitious "Negroland" (the "Black Belt") runs contrary to every fact of American history and to every conception of contemporaneous tendencies and movements among the Negro people. The fundamental falsity of the "national minority" orientation comes to crass expression in the obvious inappropriateness of the slogan of "self-determination" (the proper slogan for a people suffering from *national* oppression) to the condition of the Negro in America. The slogan of self-determination, in a situation where every force of bourgeois law, custom and public opinion, constantly operates to maintain and widen the breach between the races, is an objective support to jim-crowism. The point of view of the Negro people as a national minority is false in conception and dangerous in concrete application.

The Negro people in the United States constitute, in the words of Lenin, a subject caste on a racial basis. The Negro people form an integral element of the American nation and of the American national economy; their culture, territory, language are all characteristically American. In the American social edifice they, as a race, occupy a peculiar and depressed status, a caste status. A close analogy would be the position of the "depressed classes," the "untouchables", in Hindu society in India.

The depressed caste status of the American Negro is rooted primarily in the semi-servile condition of the Negro farmer in Southern agriculture. The under-privileged state of the Negro socially (jim-crow, segregation, lynch law) and politically follow directly. Fundamentally, the Negro in the United States forms a well defined subject caste with a distinctly inferior economic, social and political status.

The Historical Roots of the Caste Status of The Negro

Caste status is, as Lenin has pointed out more than once, essentially a pre-capitalist institution, a phase or a remnant of a non-capitalist (and economic) order. How to account for the existence of this "remnant of feudalism" in the highly developed capitalist system of this country is the first problem of a Marxist approach to the "Negro Question."

The roots of the present subject status of the Negro in America must be traced back to the days of slavery, nearly three-quarters of a century ago. Under salvery there was an immediate and obvious basis for the social subjection of the black men as such—their economically enslaved condition as a race. Had the American Civil War really effected the complete emancipation of the Negro slave, there would indeed have been no ground for the continued existence of the Negro as an inferior caste. But the victorious industrial bourgeoisie of the North adopted a course of action that led to quite other results. It injected the "Radical" plan of Reconstruction, a plan that envisaged the complete destruction of the economic and political power of the slaveocracy and the "real" (bourgeois) emancipation of the Negro slaves, i. e. the transformation into free peasant-proprietors and into free preletarians. On the contrary, the Northern bourgeoisie, after considerable hesitation and vacillation, threw its support to the "Conservative" plan of Reconstruction which aimed to conciliate the old slave-owners by abolishing chattel slavery in name but retaining it in somewhat modified form in fact. The bourgeois-democratic revolution—the essence of the Civil War—was thereby stifled and distorted; the emancipation of the Negro was rendered incomplete, even from a consistent bourgeois standpoint. Thus, the present economic status of the Negro farmer is essentially a survival of slavery. And when, in the course of time, the Negro farmer comes to enter industry; he naturally brings with him his caste status. The specially depressed economnic position of the Negro is the basis upon which the whole system of social, political and cultural subjection is reared.

The caste status of the American Negro is essentially a pre-capitanst survival, a "relic of feudalism". But such pre-capitalist survivals find a welcome place in the decaying structure of capitalism in its final , imperialist-monopoly epoch. The bourgeoisie is no longer, as it was in the great days of its youth, the ruthless destroyer of the obsolete and the reactionary. In its senility, "the decaying bourgeoisie . . . supports everything that is backward, dying and medieval . . ." (Lenin). The specially depressed economic status of the Negro peasant and proletarian serves as a valuable source of super-profit for monopoly-capital --in a strictly analogous manner to colonial exploitation. At the same time it serves a point of support for the class domination of the bourgeoisie ("Divide and rule!") For this reason the race oppression of the Negro has become an integral element of the bourgeoisie-imperialist system in this country.

It is the specific caste status of the American Negro and the integration of this status into the structure of American imperialism, that race prejudice ("white chauvinism") has its roots. Class interests are directly transmitted into class ideology; this is a fundamental social mechanism. The

caste status of the American Negro—so advantageous to the ruling class from the viewpoint of economic profit and class power—is transformed into the corresponding class ideology—the history of the "inherent racial inferiority" of the Negro, race prejudice, etc. But "the ruling ideas of any age are the ideas of the ruling class" (Marx). Race prejudice thus developes into an element of the currently accepted social thought (bourgeois ideology) and is absorbed by the other classes of society to the degree that they are under the ideological influence of the ruling class. It is because the white American workers and farmers are so "backward", i. e., so much under the spiritual influence of the bourgeoisie that they are so afflicted with anti-Negro race prejudice. A secondary factor in the same direction is the role that the feeling of racial superiority plays as a form of psychic compensation to the backward masses of the white toilers for the incredible miseries of their everyday existence. Nor can the deliberate activities of the white ruling class in stirring up race hatred be minimized.

The great Negro migrations during the last two decades, in the course of which scores of thousands of Negro farmers swarmed to the great Northern industrial centers and to the basic industries of the land, really introduced a new stage in the history of the American Negro. They effected a profound social fermentation and a basic realignment of class forces. They faced the Negro masses with a whole series of new problems arising out of the new urban and industrial environment. They really created the modern Negro proletariat. They greatly stimulated the development of the Negro bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie and seriously transformed the relations between these classes. They had a profound effect upon the Negro peasantry in the South, sunk in the mire of peonage and semi-serfdom. They also greatly influenced the relations of two races in the North as well as in the South. All of these phenomena soon made themselves evident in their effect upon the changed structure of American Negro society.

The social organization of the Negro people in this country, altho, of course, closely related to and in fact integrated into American society as such, bears a characteristic aspect, especially in the relation of classes and the specific gravity of each in the whole. The organization of Negro society resembles, in certain respects, the organization of society in a colony or a subject nation.

The Negro bourgeoisie is rather weak numerically (absolutely and relatively) and even weaker economically. It has no hold upon or contact with basic industry; it is almost exclusively confined to certain very unimportant branches, usually organized on a small scale, or to commercial and related occupations that emerge in the large Negro sections of the big cities, South as well as North. But thru the Negro bourgeoisie (and thru the conservative sections of the professionl "race leaders", the white American bouregoisie exerts tremendous influence over the masses of the Negro people. The Negro bourgeoisie is the class agency of the white domination over the Negro people and ie operates with borrowed power. The fundamental standpoint of the Negro bourgeoisie was theoretically formulated by Booker T. Washington in the famous "Atlanta Compromise": The Negro is to be content with his place in the American (bourgeoisie) scheme of things. He is to bend his energies towards becoming an efficient servant of the white master. Any present aspiration for social and political rights —not to speak of social equality —is a vain and dangerous illusion; In the South the Negroes are to acquiesce in their complete political disfranchisement; in the North they are to serve as blind voting cattle for the Republican party. Lately, an infamous flirtation with the Democratic party (in North and South) has been initiated (the DePriest "non-partisan" conference). Within the last year the crusade against Communism has become an important part of the services rendered by the Negro bourgeoisie to their white masters. The political activities of the "race leaders" of this class are marked by clique squabbles, gross corruption and shameless patronage—all at the expense of the Negro masses. Of the emancipation of their people they know nothing and care less.

Thru the sham social prestige, lent it by the white ruling class, the Negro bourgeoisie and its professional "race leaders" have been able hitherto to dominate the social and political ideas of the backward Negro masses. In this work the widespread network of Negro social and fraternal societies (especially the churches) have played a very important role.

The Negro petty bourgeoisie and professionals (most of the professionals belong to the petty bourgeoisie) are more numerous altho proportionately also smaller among the Negroes than among the whites. (Only in the proportion of clergy to the population do the Negroes show precedence.) Like the bourgeoisie this class found a firm basis of existence (especially in the North) only with the great Negro migrations and the creation of the huge Negro cities in the relatively free atmosphre of the North. In the post-war "renascence" a period of deep-going fermentation and real achievement, the Negro intellectual played a brilliant role, especially in literature and the fine arts.

As a consequence of the characteristic caste

status of the Negro people in American society, the Negro petty bourgeoisie is destined to play a far more significant and progressive social role in the struggle of the Negro people for emancipation and in the general social struggle than is the white petty bourgeoisie in the analagous situation. As a significant factor in the life and development of the race the Negro bourgeoisie is second only to the Negro proletariat.

A large part of the Negro betty bourgeoisie is bound up, economically, organizationally and ideaologically, with the Negro bourgeoisie which it aids in carying out its specific role as the agency of white capitalism among the Negroes. Considerable sections, however have already gone a long way in freeing themselves more or less, from the spiritual domination of the bourgeoisie, or at least from the crassest bourgeois, prejudics. The social outlook of these sections of the petty bourgeoisie has hitherto been marked, quite inevitably considering their class position, by its endless vagaries, by its extravagant oscillations from one extreme to another, by its fantastic uptopianism combined with an equally fantastic "practicalism"—but all within the framework of the basic bourgeois preconceptions. Especially characteristic is its strange faith in the belief that the "Negro question" can be solved within the framework of capitalism, perhaps with the benevolent aid of the white capitalists themselves. At one time, Garveyism, an essentially reactionary philosophy based on an inverted form of the "white supremacy" gospel of the white masters and shot thru with the crasssest demagogery and the grossest charlatanism, had considerable hold over the lower middle class elements of the large Negro cities. Now Garveyism is happily dead. Today the Negro intellectuals and professionals are lost in the absurd utopia of creating a self-contained Negro economy thru utilizing here the "organized buying power" of the race or thru some equally efficacious means. The capricious and everchanging vagaries that dominate the Negro petty bourgeoisie are a certain indication of the gulf that exists between it and the masses of the Negro people, the peasants and workers, whose interests are poles apart from the unreal fantasies of the small man or professional. Its estrangement from its own people with the consequent lack of political and social stability, is unquestionably the greatest inner weakness of the Negro petty bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, from the general historical viewpoint, the Negro petty bourgeoisie still has progressive potentialities in view of the essentially democratic character of the the struggle against the caste oppression of the Negroes. Some sections of the Negro intellectuals are already marching leftwards, primarily as a resut of the profound impression made upon them by the example of the Soviet Union. But the actual realization of its historical potentialities implies an end to reactionary and futile utopian dreaming, a participation in their interests and aspirations, a close alliance with the advanced sections of the proletariat, white and black.

As has already been pointed out the Negro farmers in the South (where the bulk of the Negro people and the vast majority of the Negro farmers are to be found) are not "free" farmers in the capitalistic sense of the term. They occupy an intermediate position between "free" farmers and slaves—semi-serf position. This is the basic element of the caste status of the Negro people in this country. There are practically no Negro agricultural capitalists and almost as few wealthy farmers. The vast majority of the Negro farmers —whether tenants (and the proportion of tenancy is very high) or nominal "owners" — find themselves in the category of the poorest of the poor, exploited in pre-capitalist and semi-feudal forms of exploitation (peonage, share-cropping, etc., in many cases even forced labor). The Negro agricultural worker is not a "free" laborer in the bourgeoisie sense; he also toils under semi-slave relations of exploitation. On this basis, a superstructure of caste oppression has been raised of incredible viciousness. The most elementary form of economic organization is prohibited under penalty of death (the cases of the Phillips County, Arkansas, and the Camp Hill, Alabama, sharecroppers unions).

Yet even here the wave of Negro migrations and the experiences of the World War have had an immense effect. The bleak seclusion, the dreary isolation of decades, the hopeless desolation, was broken. A vigorous breath of fresh air swept thru the poisonous atmosphere of the Old South. The vision of the Negro peasant was suddenly and immensely enlarged; intimate contacts were established with migrated friends and relatives in the North; and understanding began to dawn that things must not be always— and are not everywhere—the same. The Negro migrations and the World War stimulated the maturity of the Negro peasant as a vital factor in the movement for freedom.

The Negro proletarian is primarily to be found in unskilled and semi-skilled capacities in large-scale basic industry. Altho he has become a proletarian he has brought his caste statute with him: he occupies a position of distinct inferiority in the scheme of things in industry. He has no access to

the more desirable situations; he is hindered in his approach to skilled or semi-skilled jobs; he is forced into the least paid and most menial occupations; he is discriminated against in wages and working conditions. His recent peasant background and his lack of collective experience in the labor movement are expressed in his backwardness in class conciousness and in his indifferent or even negative attitude on many of the basic questions of the class struggle. (This tendency, of course, helped by the antagonistic attitude of the white workers and labor leaders). The white employing class has not been slow in utilizing this backwardnss of the Negro workers and the antagonism between the Negro and white workers in their attack on the labor movement and on the working class as a whole.

Yet in spite of all temporary circumstances, the Negro proletariat constitutes historically the natural leadership of the Negro people in its social struggle in American society. The leading role of the proletariat within the Negro people is made inevitable by the innner processes of capitalist production which thrust the proletariat to the fore of modern society, organize it, stimulate its class consciousness, widen its political horizon, and give it that collective self-confidence, solidarity and consciousness of aim which are the necessary attributes of class leadership. The emergence of the Negro proletariat as the leader of the Negro people still remains for the future. The creation of the modern Negro proletariat, thru the great migration, is certainly the most significant event in the history of the Negro since the days of Reconstruction.

The Negro Worker and American Labor

The sudden influx of tens of thousands of black workers into Northern industry inevitably aggravated the anti-Negro prejudice of the backward workers—and the vast majority of the American workers are still backward. At the same time the narrow and exclusive craft structure and the opportunist philosophy of American trade unionism observed from the very beginning as a most seriours obstacle in the way of the black worker in industry. The conservative trade unions, in spite of occasional fine phrases, have practically closed their doors to the Negro workers and have all but invited them to throw in their lot with the white capitalists as scabs and strike-breakers—a course incessantly urged by the conservative Negro leaders as well. The darkest page in the history of the American organized labor movement is its shameful record of antipathy and discrimination against the black worker.

But the process of the class struggle promises to heal even this ominous breach in the ranks of the American proletariat. The white heat of class struggle will burn out the corruption of race prejudice. The fraternization of white and colored workers in the South during recent strikes, however, hesitating, uncertain and unstable, is a straw in the wind. The slow but inevitable deepening of the class consciousness of the white proletariat, i. e., its growing ideological liberation from the bourgeoisie, will certainly deliver the white workers from the thoroly bourgeois curse of race prejudice.

The submergence of national and racial differences within the proletariat in the firm ties of class solidarity is an indispensable requisite for the triumph of the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. The struggle against the race prejudice of the white workers is a fundamental task of all revolutionary forces in the labor movement. In the Communist movement, in which all inner-class distinctions vanish, any open or disguised manifestation of race prejudice, which comes as a result of the pressure of bourgeois ideology on the working class, must be deliberately and consistently eliminated.

Negro Emancipation and the Proletarian Revolution

The whole burden of the analysis of the status of the Negro people in this country goes to prove that the deliverance of the Negro people from their caste existence is in its content essentially a democratic task—the only form of uncompleted bourgeoisie revolution in the United States today. In that respect it is similar to the liberation of subject nations or colonies. Only the elimination of the underlying economic conditions upon which the subjection of the American Negro is predicated, can make possible any real emancipation. The radical eradication of the semi-feudal forms of exploitation, of peonage, tenancy, share-cropping, furnishing, the shattering of the power of the Southern landlords thru the nationalization of the land and its distribution among the cultivators, the elimination of all elements of inferiority in the Negro's status in industry—thence are the basic conditions upon which the social and political liberation of the colored people is conditioned. These measures represent merely the demands of consistent democracy: they are in all respects akin to the classical ideals of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the great French revolution, for example. Not a single one is a specifically socialist remand—not one necessarily implies the socialalization of all the means of production, etc.

But the democratic character of task of Negro liberation from caste status by no means implies that the "Negro question" today can be solved within the framework of the capitalist system and capitalist democracy. So anti-democratic has the bourgeoisie become in its period of decay, so organically bound up with everything that is outlived, reactionary and decadent that the realization of the basic democratic demands is possible only thru the overthrow of capitalist "democracy", thru the concentration of political power in the hands of the proletariat. In such dialectical contradiction does history move that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can guarantee democracy to the masses and bring real democracy, for the first time, to the Negro people. A whole historical period has passed since the Civil War; a bourgeoisie revolution in the U. S. A. today is an historical impossibility—today only a proletarian revolution can accomplish what the American bourgeois revolution that was the Civil War failed to do.

From this viewpoint, the class differentiation, now rapidly taking place among the Negro people and destroying any possible "racial unity" of all classes, is to be regarded as a profoundly progressive and revolutionary phenomenon. The Negro bourgeoisie can only be a reactionary force in the struggle for the emancipation of its own race, so firm and numerous are the bonds that tie it to white capital. The more completely and the more rapidly there takes place the class separation of the broad masses of the Negro people from the Negro bourgeoisie, the better. At the opposite pole stands the Negro proletariat, whose tremendous historical role as the chosen vanguard of the Negro people, is only emphasized by the close organic link between the democratic emancipation of the Negro people and the socialist revolution of the proletariat in this country. Under the hegamony of and in close alliance with the proletariat, the Negro peasantry and the broad sections of the Negro petty bourgeoisie can play a profoundly revolutionary role. The process of class differentiation among the Negro people lays the basis for the liberation of the Negro masses from the influence of the white bourgeoisie (transmitted thru the Negro bourgeoisie) and the achievement of the hegamony of the proletariat in the struggle for Negro emancipation.

It is clear that the racial (that is, caste) emancipation of the Negro cannot come as the result of any "purely racial" movement—of any movement deliberately aiming to subordinate, in the name of an unreal "racial unity", the masses of the Negro people to the narrow interests of the Negro bourgeoisie (who work hand in glove with their white paymasters), of any movement consciously striving to divorce the liberation struggle of the Negro people from the chief social movement of our times, the class war of labor against capital. The racial emancipation of the American Negro, in the present historical situation, is possible only as an integral aspect and as an inevitable consequence of the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system, of the victory of the proletariat.

Immediate Struggle and the General Perspective

It is clear that this far-reaching perspective can today assume vitality and general significance only if it can be shown in life itself to emerge as a natural development of a program of immediate action intimately associated with every phase of Negro life under the caste oppression of American society. The Communists must defend and represent the basic interests of the Negro workers, of the Negro peasant and of the Negro petty bourgeoisie, to the degree that the latter constitutes a progressive historical force. The Communists must try to weld together the masses of the Negro people (workers, peasants, city bourgeoisie) under the leadership of the Negro proletariat and against the white ruling class and its Negro agents (the Negro bourgeoisie). The Communists must throw all energies into breaking down all barriers between the Negro and white workers and into strengthening the bonds between the white workers and the Negro people. The Communist program must champion the abolition of peonage and the serf conditions of the Negro farmers in the South, the organization of leagues of share-croppers and tenants and unions of farm-laborers. The Communists must stand for the complete equality of the Negro in industry, the smashing of the barriers against the Negro workers in the trade unions, the organization of the unorganized and the unskilled colored workers. The Communists must take up the struggle against lynching, jim-crowism, and discrimination. The Communists demand the complete social and political equality of the Negro race. The Communists strive to break the hold of the capitalist political parties over the Negro masses and to win these masses to the cause of labor, which is their cause as well. and to labor class political action (the Labor party as the champion of the oppressed Negroes). Thru the participation of the Negro masses in these struggles (and of Negroes and whites side by side), thru the development of these strug-

gles to ever higher and higher levels, the road will be opened for the realization of the far-reaching perspective of the final emancipation of the Negro people from their submerged caste position as a phase of the general emancipation of the toiling masses from the yoke of capitalism.

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THE APPLICATION OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM TO THE HISTORY OF ART AND LITERATURE

By August Thalheimer

Marx and Engels only occasionally applied dialectical materialism to the history of art and literature. The outline of the economic substructure and the political and social superstructure absorbed their chief interest, for theoretical as well as for practical reasons. Mehring, while exploring the new field of literary history by means of this method, developed new phases of this splendid instrument of research. As with Marx and Engels, so with Mehring, the most instructive information is not found primarily in the more or less short and occasional remarks directly bearing on the method, to which they adhere in their works, but rather in these works themselves. Withal, it was understood by Mehring, as well as by Marx and Engels, that the historico-materialist method presupposes a complete mastery of the actual historical material and full acquaintance with the results of bourgeois science in its critical revolutionizing of the bourgeois ideological interpretation of history.

In the field of literary history Mehring mastered all the tools of the bourgeois critique of literature. The brilliant, translucent, and seemingly playful presentation which distinguishes his works in this field and makes of them historical works of art, from which all the mould of the workshop has been removed, must not hide from us the fact that they were all preceded by the most thorough, the most conscientious and the most painstaking research. The beauty of their form is intimately connected with the pithiness of their content. Only the two combined give permanence to the results of his research. Hence it follows that Marxist research, which does not consider the ideological superstructure as being isolated, but deduces it from the economic substructure, must extend and broaden its field of investigation and master greater amounts of material. This may explain, incidentally, why Mehring never wrote a history of German literature using the historico-materialist method as a basis, although no one possessed the knowledge necessary for this work to such an extent as he did. Moreover, this is probably the reason why such a history will not be written by some other author in the near future.

Marx characterized the root of the matter—with which the method is concerned—in his famous sketch of an introduction to the Critique of Political Economy in the following:

> *"It is well known that certain periods of highest development of art stand in no direct connection with the general development of society, nor with the material and the skeleton structure of its organization. Witness the example of the Greeks as compared with the modern nations or even Shakespeare. As regards certain forms of art, as e. g. the epos, it is admitted that they can never be produced in the world-epoch making form as soon as art as such comes into existence; in other words, that in the domain of art, certain important forms of it are possible only at a low stage of its development. If that be true of the mutual relations of different forms of art within the domain of art itself, it is far less surprising that the same is true of the relation of art as a whole to the general development of society. The difficulty lies only in the general formulation of these contradictions. No sooner are they specified than they are explained."*

That is to say, it is not a question of abstract speculation, or of empty generalizations, but rather of a concrete, historical examination of relations. Thus, also, Mehring worked in the field of the history of literature and art through "specification"; only in this manner can fruitful and permanent results be achieved.

In order to obtain a true picture of Mehring's application of dialectical materialism to the history of literature, it will be best to select a few characteristic cases.

Biography of Schiller

Let us take his biography of Schiller. In this

essay Mehring brilliantly shows how historical materialism, contrary to current asssertions, first makes possible that "those human beings most clearly impressed by the life and action of a historical period are revived with all their human qualities." Artistic talent is not the object of historical research; but a "gift of nature: only upon being molded by historical conditions does it become an object of historical research." The raw material of nature, transformed by "historical conditions" alone, gives a full, vivid picture of the historic personality and its historical effect. Mehring characterizes the personal traits of Schiller, the nature and strength of his natural talent and relates them to the peculiarities of the Swabian race. He notes the influence of the provincial surroundings of his childhood, the influence of Catholicism, the stimulus of the Italian opera in Ludwigsburg and the inhibiting influence of the Karlsschool. He probes into the literary sources of Schiller, such as the influence of the Storm and Stress period.

He characterizes the peculiarity of Schiller's lyrical talents, his philosophical tendencies, the influence of Kant's philosophy, of antiquity, of history, of Goethe, etc. on Schiller, and associates these facts with the changing class relations in Germany at that time, with the concrete form of the state, with the stage of development of bourgeois class-consciousness, and with the stage of economic development. The general formula of historical materialism is thus transformed into a picture just as clear as it is rich. The economic "skeleton" is covered with muscles, nerves, and skin. A manifold series of intermediate stages establish the connections between the economic substructure and the ideological superstructure, the development of the poet, the preparation of his various works, their material content and form. By means of this method, he easily explains a phenomenon like Heinrich von Kleist, who had until then been an insoluble riddle to bourgeois critics of literary history. The latter's natural talents; a somewhat pathological predisposition, an originally artistic and specfically dramatic talent; social conditions: belonging to the Prussian Junkerdom, whose mental horizon he was not able to break through—those are the chief elements which explain the work and the fate of the poet in its essential features.

Finally his analysis of so peculiar a phenomenon as Lenau. The mixture of nationalities in him, the fact that he never completely assimulated German intellectual life, (his complete failure to understand Hegel's philosophy), his association with the "Swabian school"—the reflection of the reactionary, philistine wing of the petty bourgeoisie—the feudal-Magyar origin of Lenau's consciousness of unity; these are the essential ingredients which molded and explain the poet.

Recognizing Limitations

Mehring was clearly conscious of the defects which, however, were not personal defects, still adhering to his application of dialectical materialism to the history of literature and art, and he expressed this frankly. It is all the more necessary to emphasize this, since most important indications for future Marxist research are found here. We have in mind Mehring's dispute with Paul Ernst concerning the Lessinglegende. (Neue Zeit, XII). The objections of Paul Ernst, who played only a temporary role in the German labor movement, are today no longer worthy of detailed consideration. They move on the usual, flat level, namely, that other than material reasons are not considered by Mehring; charging him with the underestimation of the psychological factor, of literary vogues, and other such commonplaces. Paul Ernst tried specfically to overthrow the fundamental thesis of Mehring's Lessinglegende by means of a few arbitrarily selected quotations from authors of the 18th century; Mehring's thesis being that Lessing had been the most progressive representative of bourgeois class-consciousness of Germany at that time. According to Paul Ernst, there was no bourgeois class worthy of any consideration in the Germany of Lessing's time, whose ideological champion he could have been. The following statements taken from the answer of Mehring to this criticism easily dispose of the superficialities of Paul Ernst by means of a simple production of concrete, historical facts, and are at the same time important to us.

> *"If Paul Ernst wishes to make a just reproach, it would have to be the opposite to the one he made. I paid not too much, but too little attention to the economic structure of society out of which our classical literature grew. My book undoubtedly has this fault, and in order not to deceive the reader, I emphasized this in the introduction. I said, there, that I merely wanted to dissolve critically the bourgeois caricature of Lessing and that I intended to show the general characteristics of the true Lessing in this criticism, that a scientific history of our classical literature will only be possible when the 18th century will be freed from its ideological chaos of tales and bables, when it will be viewed from its economic basis. That, however, is a problem which cannot be solved by a single person, nor can it be accomplished in a day. If Paul Ernst believes that he can*

solve it by means of a handful of quotations, then he has not even the faintest notion of its difficulty and its vast extent . . . But Paul Ernst wants to throw away the good with the evil, and, even if I admit that the bourgeoisie in 18th Century Germany has remained far behind the corresponding development in England and France, I still maintain that, compared with the situation in the 17th century, it had made more or less factual progress, progress which permitted the bourgeoisie to remain on the same mental heights with the western civilized nations, despite its economic and political backwardness. Concerning this, also, a long series not so much of contemporary opinions as of economic facts could be cited; although a thorough drawing-up of all details is for the time being impossible and, moveover, will remain impossible as long as the archives are open only to prejudiced scribblers of history." (Neue Zeit XLL 2, pp. 174-5).

Here indeed lies the decisive point for the future development of the application of dialectical materialism to the history of literature and art, as well as to the history of ideology in general. It is, of course, merely an expedient that conclusions drawn a posteriori concerning the economic structure and development have to be deduced from political and ideological phenomena. The investigation of classical German literature and philosophy requires for its more complete understanding a much more detailed presentation of economic history of the 18th and 19th centuries than was at the disposal of Mehring and than which he himself could have given. Bourgeois scientists have not yet given it, and, moreover, will not be able to give it in the future. The Marxist development of these bases cannot be the work of a single person.

Collective work is needed. By means of such a broadened and more detailed economic-historical basis alone can we succeed in carrying further the work performed by Mehring, can we further clarify and more distinctly comprehend the individual relations between literary, artistic, and ideological development and its economic basis than is possible on the basis of a history of economics which merely considers the crudest features. It is now a question of investigating the inner structure of economic conditions, economic development, and of class relationships.

Two facts are involved here. First, the more precise characterization and classification of the economic stages of development, deducing therefrom the precise stages of growth of the bourgeois class-consciousness. Secondly, it is a question of classifying the strata within the bourgeoisie and the other classes, which pass through each individual period and form the basis for the explanation of the various ideological currents existing in juxtaposition (for ex. Schopenhauer side by side with Hegel, etc.)

It will then be shown that the method of historical materialism will serve to lift unsuspected treasures in the direction indicated by Mehring himself. It will also serve us to help us comprehend much more distinctly and in a more detailed fashion the economic *conditioning* of literary and artistic development.

In Historico-Materialist Esthetics

All contemplation and criticism of art, including the historico-materialist, requires esthetic theory as a guide. While Mehring did not create an esthetic theory on the historico-materialist basis, he contributed important elements for its construction. In doing so, he made his criticism of the esthetic theory of German classical literature, and philosophy, especially of Schiller and Kant, his starting point—just as Marx naturally started by criticising classical English economy, namely Adam Smith and Ricardo.

Mehring justly considers Kant as the "founder of scientific esthetics". Kant's merit as a pathblazer consisted in proving the "first requisite of scientific esthetics, i. e., that art is the inherent and native property of humanity." Kant is the first to separate sharply and neatly the esthetic from the logical and moral fields. He explained the beautiful as "that which devoid of interest necessarily delights by means of its pure form alone," as a feeling of delight, which arises from "the purposeless harmony of the imagination and understanding, from the free play of both these forces." He separates natural beauty, calling it "free beauty" from artistic beauty, which he designates as "bestowed beauty". Kant conceives of artistic beauty as the perfection of form, as an agreement in which the particular itself is in accordance with the universal conception. The ideal of art is the *Idea* in the form of an individual object as contained within the universal conception. The highest ideal of art is man. Art should be law observant without law, teleological without a purpose.

Kant did not create his system of esthetics out of the depth of his soul. His system was the first theoretical blow to classical art and literature. As such, it was a pioneer deed. The overthrow and further development of German classical esthetics through critical weapons must result from the same general viewpoint as the destruction of classical economy through the Marxian critique. Adam Smith and Ricardo regarded the economic laws of

capitalism as eternal laws of nature. Marx changed them into historical laws which, having arisen out of their antagonisms, develop their contradictions at a certain stage by virtue of the objective dialectics and suddenly change from their position of levers for the development of social productive forces into impediments which must be done away with through a socialist revolution and be replaced by a new system. In the same manner Kant (and with him Schiller) regarded the esthetic laws as abstracted, as apart from the art of the rising, revolutionary bourgeoisie as eternal, absolute natural laws of art.

The overthrow and further development of esthetic theory by means of historical materialism must begin at this point. "Kant", Mehring observes, "became the founder of scientific esthetics, though he failed to recognize the historical conditioning of his esthetic laws, though he regarded as absolute that which should only be taken for relative." A second fundamental defect of Kantian esthetics consists in its subjective idealistic character, which is in turn very closely connected with the general character of his philosophy. Kant only considers subjective "motives of taste" to be of any value, i. e. those which are founded in the constitution of the human mind. Here a "Copernician revolution" has and had to be made, a turn from idealism to materialism, from the subjective to the objective. This holds true, not only for Kant, but for all esthetic theories, which seek the "motives of taste" exclusively in subjective factors; i. e., in permanent natural attributes of the human soul; i. e. it holds true just as well for every psychological theory of esthetics which in the final analysis is nothing but the shallow dissolution of subjective-idealistic metaphysical esthetics. "Objective motives of taste", however, "can only exist on historical ground."

The problem of scientific esthetics can be thus posed: Can a scientific history of esthetic feelings, as they have developed and progressed in human society, be written? Do objective motives of such feelings prevail in the immense and endless confusion of subjective tastes? Whoever stands on the ground of historical materialism will give an affirmative answer, and regard the historico-materialist method as the only key to the solution of the problem. The basis of such a solution, however, lies in the realization that the mode of production of the material life also conditions and determines the "artistic life-process". All esthetics have only conditioned value; they are subject to historical change.

Here, however, one must guard against a serious error. The laws of esthetics are historical, relative, limited, and conditioned in time and space, i. e. variable laws of esthetics. It merely demands that, at times, they be transformed and revolutionized, corresponding to the historical changes of art. Moreover, it is understood by the dialectic materialist that esthetics, in its relation to true art, constitutes the secondary and not the primary factor, as Mehring constantly pointed out. "Every creative work of art creates its own esthetics." Art is the relatively original factor; esthetics the derived factor. Esthetics must always conform to art and not vice versa. The reaction of the secondary factor naturally also sets in here. Insofar as esthetics works out the laws of art of a definite epoch, and developes them in a general systematic manner, it reacts on the creation of art itself. That is not all. The laws of capitalistic economy, specific and historical though they may be, contain at the same time, once stripped of their specific quality, a definite body of economic laws of a general nature, which will be of value in a socialist economy.

Thus Marx explains the laws of capitalist accumulation as a specific historically transitory, form of certain general laws which must be kept with each expansion of production in whatever form it may take place, if a continually self-expanding supply of society with material goods is to be assured. In the same manner do the laws of classical esthetics contain a definite body of esthetic laws, which extend beyond a single epoch of art Some of these will be pointed out in the following statements taken from Mehring.

Art and Nature

The relation of art to nature. Mehring always vigorously opposed the esthetic theory of naturalism, according to which art would have to confine itself to the simple initiation of nature. The watchword "imitation of nature" may mean various things, depending on the development of the class struggle. That which the present ruling class experiences constitutes nature and truth. Nature as used by Russeau symbolizes a "signal of attack in world history", a revolt against feudal convention and decadence. This self-same watchword acquired an entirely different meaning with Gustav Freytag in the Germany of the fifties. There it signified the stock-in-trade of the firm T. O. Schroeder, i. e., the vulgar glorification of vulgar capitalist higgling. In the modern naturalism of the nineties Mehring correctly discenrned the reflection which the glowing torch of the mighty labor movement cast upon art. The merit of naturalism consisted in the fact it had the courage and the love of truth to describe the transitory as is.

But that is only going halfway. The success of naturalism demands on whether it will be able to

complete the second part of the way, that is, to describe that which is in the making, the struggle for emancipation of the working class. Because of its inability to do this, bourgeois naturalism failed precisely as art, being both limited and fettered by the bourgeois outlook, as art of a decadent class. Mehring explains the nature of the "art of idealization," which forms an essential ingredient of all true art, by means of the historical dramas of Schiller. Omitting all that is acidental, arbitrary, and incidental to the historic reality, they were able to set forth the historical significance of a character such as Wallenstein far better than contemporary historians—than the historian Schiller himself. This "idealization" considered as a general method of art can be separated from the specific esthetic or philosophical idealism, on which Schiller, Kant, and Hegel based it. The art of a rising revolutionary class in particular can not do without it; a dull copy of reality can never be its esthetic standard. From the point of view of the needs and capabilities of bourgeois art in its present stage it is easy to understand that the "new objectivity" treats "Reportage" as true art or as a special new form of art. The esthetic theory of a certain period of postwar art, however, can be no more of a criterion to the working class than could the esthetic theory of naturalism in the nineties.

Art and Propaganda

Mehring always vigorously opposed the bourgeois esthetics of his time, since it permitted bourgeois propaganda to be sowed thickly in art, while it condemned socialist propaganda as "true propaganda." Mehring was of the opinion, that, as far as esthetic judment is concerned, the important thing to consider is whether the end in view, i. e., the propanganda, is embodied in an artistic form by means of artistic methods. Mehring believed, furthermore, that great art, which blindly ignored the important problems of its period, is not possible. The great social interest at present, however, lies in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. Even reactionary propaganda is capable of artistic expression. For example, Heinrich von Kleists "Hermansschlacht", which presents the war of destruction waged by barbaric tribes against a superior culture in an artistic form. Incidentally, the struggle of these barbarians viewed in its relation to world history had its progressive feature, inasmuch as it served as a means of displaying a declining culture, which had entered a blind alley, and as a means of creating the bases for a new historical rise. Mehring proves just as convincingly that propaganda "can destroy the most noble work of art—if inartistic means are employed"using "Michael Kohlhaas," a short story of the same poet, as an example.

Form and Content

Mehring's view concerning the proper relation of form to content was easily arrived at by putting his statements regarding the lyrics of Platen and the dramas of Hauptman together. He explains the pseudo-classical form of Platen, above all of his lyrics, as a protest against romanticism, i. e., as having arisen from revolutionary and not reactionary motives. At the same time, Mehring finds fault with the poet since he could only put the new content into an old form. Heine was the first to create a new lyric form corresponding to the new content. He drew from romanticism and the German folk song that which could be drawn for his purpose.

On the other hand, Mehring made the following remark in a discussion of Gerharts Hauptman's Florian Geyer (Neue Zeit, 1896) : "The rebirth of the German drama does not lie in the revolution of the dramatic form, or rather only insofar as this revolution is a means to an end. The disregard of traditional dramatic forms means progress, provided a new dramatic content can and should be gained. But this becomes an evil when it means merely striving to exist for its own sake, when representing a realistic reproduction of accidental externals, instead of the spiritual reflection of the historical process." Speaking of Gorki's milieu drama he says that here indeed does the new form correspond to a new content. Furthermore, in the new form, progress has taken place similar to that in history, where the hero (in the old sense of the word) is replaced by the masses. Nevertheless, he does not fail to add by way of criticism that the drama as opposed to the epos necessarily requires action. (Hence, it follows: that: In the last analysis a new artistic content also requires a new artistic form.) New content in an old form is a defect, i. e., imperfect artistic progress. New form, lacking new content is an evil in the sense that it leads to an artistic reaction. New content embodied in an old form constitutes only half the revolution. New form with old content is just a semblance of a revolution—a true indication of decadence in the field of art. Therefore also follows a correction of the esthetic interpretation of Schiller and Kant, who only separated form and content, not taking into consideration their reciprocal relations.

The Drama

A few remarks may be added here which refer to separate forms of art. Mehring defines the drama as "the height of all hitherto existing poetry." But the "world of poetry" extends further. In

agreement with Lessing he believes that, though the dramatist is free to handle historical facts as he likes, historical characters ought to be sacred to him. Dramatic art, though working on historical material, must understand the historical process of its own particular time. The laws of an epos differ essentially from that of the drama, their mixture of effacement as, for example, in Schiller's *William Tell* or in Tolstoi's *Power of Darkness* constitutes an artistic weakness.

Hegel and Art

A certain defect of Mehring's attacks in the field of esthetics lies in the fact that though he discusses Schiller and Kant—the latter the founder of scientific esthetics—he does not analyze Hegel, who completed it within the bourgeois framework. An esthetic theory based on dialectical materialism must concern itself with Hegel all the more since he, though still within the bounds of idealism, overcame a number of fundamental defects in Kantism esthetics and in a certain sense paved the way for a materialistic conception of esthetics to a greater degree than did both Kant and Schiller. Quite in keeping with his whole interpretation, Hegel introduces the objective along with the historical element into esthetics, "The Philosophy of Fine Arts." The demiurgos of this historical process, to be sure, is the "absolue idea!"

A particularly serious defect is the pervading conception that "the ideals and the formulae of art are rooted in the basic religious views of the times and the people, the universal pattern being God and his Idea." But regardless how much the Hegelian system distorts the picture of the actual development of the arts as a whole, nevertheless, taken in detail, it affords ingenious and deep insight into the connection between social relations —in the last analysis class relations—and the mode of production and the forms and contents of art. Thus, he recognizes in Reinecke Fuchs, the medieval satirical epos, an artistic picture of "feudal world conditions," especially in Germany. He discloses in a profound manner the relation of the classical Greek epos to the social conditions of the times, of the "epic world conditions." His class characterizations of Cervantes, Don Quixote, of the chivalric epos, of Ariosto, of Dutch painting could easily be taken over by a history of art of esthetic base on dialectical materialism.

Concerning the interpretation of art as a mere "initiation" of nature, Hegel remarks forcefully:

"In general, we may sum it up by saying that, as a matter of imitation, art cannot maintain a rivalry with nature, and if it tries, must look like a worm trying to crawl after an elephant." (Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art, translated by Bernard Bosanquet, p. 82.)

As proof, Hegel states among other things, that:

"The common outer and inner world also no doubt present to us the essence of reality, but in the shape of a chaos of accidental matters, encumbered by the immediateness of sensuous presentation, and by arbitrary states, events, characters, etc. Art liberates the real import of appearances from the semblance and deception of this bad and fleeting world and imparts to phenomenon semblances a higher reality, born of mind." (p. 15, ibid)

Concerning the relative historical significance of the imitation of nature, Hegel makes the just observation:

"It is in this respect chiefly that the principle of naturalism in general and of copying nature in particular has recovered its influence of modern times. Its sin is to recall an art which has grown feeble and indistinct to the vigor and crispness of nature, or again to invoke against the purely arbitrary and artificial conventionalism, as unnatural as it was inartistic, into which art had strayed, the uniform, direct and solidly coherent sequences of nature." (p. 86-87, ibid)

Concerning the relationship of art to propaganda, Hegel makes the following pertinent remarks:

"But the purpose of instruction may be treated as purpose, to such a degree that the universal nature of the represented content is doomed to be exhibited and expounded directly and obviously as abstract proposition, prosaic reflection, or general theorem, and not merely in an indirect way in the concrete form of a work of art. By such a severance of sensuous plastic form, which is just what makes the work of art a work of art, becomes a mere otiose accessory, a husk which is expressly pronounced to be a mere semblance. But thereby the very nature of the work of art is distorted. For the work of art ought to bring content before the mind's eye, not in its generality as such, but with this generality made absolutely individual, and sensuously particularized. If the work of art does not proceed from this principle, but sets in relief its generalized aspect with the purpose of abstract instruction, then, the imaginative and sensuous aspect is only an external and superfluous adornment, and the work of art is a thing divided against itself, in which form and content no longer appear as grown into one. In that case the sensuously individual and the spiritually general are become external to one another." (pp. 97-98)

He designated the ideal of art to be:

"The reality selected out of the mass of chance

particulars, in s o far as the inner core in this external totality thus raised in opposition to universality is itself manifested as living individuality." (The Philosophy of Fine Art, translated by F. P. B. Osmaston, Vol. 1, pp. 213.)

An esthetic doctrine based on dialectical materialism cannot pass up Hegel; nor can it stop there. It becomes necessary, according to the Marxian expression, to "turn it right side up again," and to free it, at the same time, from the narrow confines of restrictions of the system. Furthermore, such a doctrine must work on the tremendous mass of material which the study of archaeology, of prehistoric times, and above all of ethnology have contributed to the development of the plastic arts, architecture, music and poetry, in the last decade. Mehring's assertion that art did not exist until society split into classes was regarded as an error even in his time. Today, we find great quantities of material showing the most ancient and most primitive beginnings of artistic activities in forms of society before the split into classes. Bourgeois science knew how to classify and arrange this material more or less superficially. The historico-materialist method alone can really disclose it. This material is of particular import to it, since the relations between the mode of production, the forms of society, the forms and contents of art appear more openly and more directly than in class societies and thus furnish the key to the most formative chapters of historical esthetics.

The Proletariat and Art

The revolutionary theory of the proletariat is not an end in itself. It is not a mere theoretical science, just as the science of the bourgeoisie never was It serves the practical needs of the proletarian class struggle. The same holds true for the application of the revolutionary theory to the field of literature and art in particular. It is completely applicable to the activities of Mehring in this field.

A number of tasks had to be carried out and Mehring did carry them out in an exemplary and comprehensive manner. First of all, those elements had to be singled out from bourgeois literature and art of the past which could satisfy the artistic needs of the revolutionary working class and impregnate its class struggle. The proletarian class struggle, in its full extent, embraces all fields of social life. It cannot entirely neglect any of them without being stunted, not even the field of literature and art Although, as will as seen later, literature and art can play the role in the preparation for the proletarian revolution which they played in certain periods of the preparation for bourgeois revolutions. The proletarian revolution is in all its stages not only a thing of the mind, but also of the will and the imagination. For that reason alone, the proletarian revolution can not do without the aid of literature and art in any of its phases. But, this too, is conditioned by the objectives of the proletarian revolution which do not only include bread, but also culture, beauty, and knowledge.

In order to make bourgeois literature serve the purpose of the struggle for emancipation of the working class, it is necessary to make a sharp critical separation of those elements which further and enlighten it from those which only serve to confuse and inhibit it. A materialistic interpretation of literature and art is needed for that purpose. It is not a question of falsifying or transforming the artistic expression of the bourgeois revolution into a proletarian one, but rather of understanding its true historical character, its conditioning, and with that its limitations. This can only be achieved by the objective historico-dialectical method of Marxism. Mehring's hitherto unexcelled examples serve as proof. He did not put the Schillers, the Goethes, the Heines into a proletarian garb which would have amounted to a falsification of their historical character. Precisely he established their true historic role in the preparation of the German bourgeois revolutior he was able to transfer that which was permanent and great in their artistic performances, (the revolutionary attitude maintained during the course of their lives and contained in their philosophy) into the current of the proletarian class struggle.

The second task—closely allied to the first—consists of critically understanding and rejecting the publications of present day bourgeoisie literature and art since they can only obscure or confuse the proletarian class struggle by means of a transfer of bourgeois thought, interpretation and spirit. It is often very much more difficult to recognize and consequently to reject reactionary bourgeois thought in its artistic form—than in its prosaic form During the period of preparation for the proletarian revolution, the last but not the least task is to convey those elements of the tradition of art, of knowledge, and of the formation of literary taste, that will be needed after the victory of the working class to enable it to develop its own art.

The Historical Approach

Art and literature, however, as was said above, can not play the same role in the preparation of the proletarian revolution which it played in certain periods during preparation for the bourgeois revolution. Mehring has shown, in the clearest

manner possible, how classical German literature and philosophy were conditioned by the stage of development of the German bourgeois classes, when they were as yet incapable of leading a direct political struggle. It was actually the period of their preparation for the future direct political struggle. The esthetic idealism of classical literature made a virtue out of its necessity But the positive significance of their doings was none the less clear to Schiller and Goethe, as well as to Fichte and Hegel. Schiller says in his "Letter of Esthetics", "Let us point out the way to the good, and the peaceful rhythm of time will bring about an evolution." Create "symbols of that which is excellent until the illusion will overcome reality and art will overcome nature, (i. e., the feudal society.")

Though it may often seem as if Mehring ascribed the role that literature and art played in the bourgeois revolution of Germany merely to special circumstances under which the German bourgeois revolution developed, i. e., its retardation in comparison with the bourgeois revolution in France and England, he realized, nevertheless, that this role is closely connected with the general conditions of bourgeoisie revolutions in general. Discussing the life and works of Tolstoi, Mehring remarks the following: "Literature is at its height whenever economics and politics are as yet too immature to bring about an historical revolution, though it is already being announced by a hundred tongues. These are the 'classical expressions' of literature." The exact content and the exact form of the "classical period" of bourgeois writers in individual countries are not only determined by the totality of class relations in their particular country, but also by the influence of surrounding countries, i. e., by the international stage of the class struggle and its ideological reflex, namely, "world literature."

A comparative study of the development of the most important national bourgeois literatures from this point of view would prove to be interesting and fruitful in many respects. Underneath these peculiarities, however, a general, typical course of the development of bourgeois literature can be discerned, founded on the general character of the bourgeois revolution and the role of the bourgeoisie therein. The bourgeoisie at the time of its revolutionary preparation is already the economically decisive ruling power, i. e., even before it becomes the ruling political power through the accomplishment of the revolution. Due to this, its economic role, the bourgeoisie becomes a decisive factor in cultural matters, in science, in literature, and art. The victory of bourgeois literature, art, and philosophy, therefore, precedes its political victory. This is a preliminary result determined by its economic and social role and at the same time is a preliminary condition for its political victory.

With the proletariat conditions not only differ, but are precisely the opposite. The proletariat represent that class in bourgeois society which is oppressed not only politically, but also and at the same time economically and culturally. Only its political victory will create the necessary conditions for its economic as well as cultural rule. Consequently, literature and art in comparison with the political and economic struggle can only play a subordinate, restricted role in the entire proletarian class struggle, during the preparation for the socialist revolution.

Bourgeois Art and the Proletarian Revolution

During the preparation for the bourgeois revolution, bourgeois art partly accompanies the fighting proletariat. This lasts for a certain period even after the partial or complete victory of the bourgeoisie, only to break at a certain point. Typical examples in German literature are Heine and Herwegh and the most typical of all Freiligrath. Concerning Freiligrath, Mehring maintains that that which made him the most enthusiastic poet of the proletariat in 1848-9 and that which, on the other hand prevented him from keeping step with the socialistic agitation of the sixties in his poetry, was above all due to the fact that the struggles of the peoples in 1848-9 with their dramatic effects, their wealth of color and personalities, served to stimulate the poetic imagination, while all these phases were lacking in the socialistic agitation of the sixties and of those of later years. "Socialistic lyricism", Mehring observes, "had its day, as long as communism symbolized prospect, hope, and longing, and thus offered free play to the poetic imagination." However, as soon as it becomes a clear recognition of necessity, "the muse remains silent beneath the sword." Excellent as these instances are, we believe that the reasons lie still deeper. "Socialistic lyricism, i. e., the revolutionary bourgeois poetry, accompanies the proletarian class struggle as long as it is related to the struggle of the bourgeoisie, as long as both overlap in their purpose and content, though antagonisms have already become apparent. The separation takes place at the point when the working class independently opposes the bourgeoisie, when the antagonisms between the two classes have become decisive and irrevocable.

Temporary contacts between bourgeois poetry and the working class again and again take place later on in the periods of transitions from one

phase of bourgeois art to another during the time of its decline. They are based each time on a temporary misunderstanding by the bourgeois artists, who look upon their revolt against certain forms (worn out by time) of bourgeois art and of bourgeois life, as being essentially the same as the revolt of the proletariat which is directed against the bourgeois class and against bourgeois life in general in all its forms, be they worn-out or revived, old-fashioned or "modern." Such was the case in the early beginnings of naturalism, when the Gerhart Hauptmann-Arno Holt and Henkells, for a time, considered themselves "socialists" or were considered by others as such.

Thus it was in the beginnings of expressionism, when the Hasenclevers, etc., wrote revolutionary hymns in the vein of Schiller. This it was at the dawn of the "new objectivity." As a rule, these authors become aware of their error. The important point is that the working class, in its turn, should not become subject to the same illusions. As for naturalism, in the beginning of this literary movement, Mehring thought that there was a possibility that it might find its way to the working class. He characterized Hauptmann's *"Weavers"* as a genuine work of art and as a "revolutionary play." However, he very soon found that naturalism was an ungrafted growth out of bourgeois soil, which could not be transplanted in the ground of the working class. Using a fitting parallel with romanticism he said: "Romanticism, basically feudal, borrowed its weapons from the bourgeoisie in order to defend itself against it; just as the Indian had borrowed the gun from the white man. The same relation holds true for the socialistic features of bourgeois naturalism; bourgeois naturalists are just as socialistically minded as the feudal romanticists were bourgeois minded, no more and no less." Mehring in no way wanted this objective characterization of the naturalist authors to be understood as being subjective. He stressed the following:

> "It would be quite unjust to attribute their narrow-minded attitude towards the proletarian class struggle to fear, calculation, selfishness, or similar objectionable motives. In this, they remained true to themselves, and one cannot ask more of them. The gap existing between them and the modern proletariat can not be bridged."

Naturalism was not the last phase of the literature of the declining bourgeoisie. A number of others followed. Perhaps not even the "new objectivity" constitutes its last stage. That which represented the socialistic semblance in naturalism is today—at a more advanced stage of bourgeois decadence and at a more developed stage of the revolutionary movement—represented by the "communistic" semblance. This, too, is of course, to be taken objectively and not subjectively.

What of Working Class Art?

Concerning the possibilities of the working class to create its art while it is still struggling for power, Mehring said: "In other words: when the declining bourgeoisie can no longer create great art, the rising working class itself can not as yet create great art, though an ardent longing for this art may dwell in the depths of its soul."

He especially considered it to be impossible for theatres founded by the proletariat before the conquest of power, or dependent on the proletariat such as the free folktheatres of his time, to pave the way for a "renaissance of dramatic art." This is quite impossible for economic reasons, but not only because of these. A definite need of them does exist. They can become a modest, though not ineffective force in order to purify the taste of the workers, to further their cultural development, and in this way ultimately serving their struggle for emancipation. It is, however, necessary to observe the "correct limit." They (the theatres) must not forget their proletarian origin and must not enter into unprincipled alliances with capitalist enterprises.

These limits drawn by Mehring are so securely founded in the essential character and the weapons of the proletarian class struggle before the seizure of power, that, today, they are just as correct as ever. Attempts to overstep these limits, whenever they are undertaken, must go to ruin. This does not happen accidentally, however, but because of inherent or essential reasons, i. e., either because of artistic reasons, or both combined. The fate of the Berlin Piscator-theatre up to now, (even prior to Hitler's assuming power) from the artistic as well as economic viewpoint, affords ample proof of the simple truths established by Mehring.

On the other hand, Mehring saw unsuspected new possibilities arise from the victory of the proletariat for the developement of art. He wrote: "The more impossible it is for a new epoch of art to develop out of the proletarian class struggle, the more certain it is, that the victory of the proletariat will bring about a new era of art, a more noble, a greater, a more splendid era then humans have ever laid eyes upon."

This prophecy will prove to be completely to the point Its realization has already begun in our days. Some will object, asking: Well, has the first victory of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union already brought about a new "era of

art"? We answer: None can or could expect that the new great will be there on "the day of the revolution," completely armed, as was Minerva who sprang fully armed from Jupiter's head. That can and will only be the case when Socialist construction has succeeded so well that "the springs of social wealth" will flow abundantly, when the chief energy of the working class will not be taken up by economic construction work and the defense against its capitalistic environment. That which can and does take place in the meantime is the development of powerful, rich, though frequently chaotic, beginnings of a new art. The dispute concerning the name, i. e. whether or not it is proletarian art, whether "proletarian art" is all possible, appears to us too scholastic and undialectical.

Just as the present period of transition—which we now have in the Soviet Union and with which every working class will have to start after its victory—is not separated by an abyss from classless society into which it will ultimately flow, so one can not draw a fixed line of demarcation between the art of this or that period of social development after the victory of the proletarian revolution.

Judging by content, the new art of Soviet Russia is undoubtedly already revolutionary and proletarian. It drew its material successively from the great and shaking events of the revolutionary upheaval and civil war, and later from those of the socialist construction and reconstruction of economy and social life in general. The new forms corresponding to the new content have not as yet been found. They will be found; one can not arbitrarily think them out or construct them artistically. Their creation has always been and always will be the work of artistic genius. The history of literature illuminated by Marxian methods, as Mehring offers it, can be of good service in a positive as well as negative manner. Positive, insofar as the new forms of art do not arise out of nothing,, but have always taken up newly applied changed, and recast elements of older forms; negatively, insofar as it shows that isolated efforts to attain a new form disregarding content lead nowhere.

The same holds true for language which, in a certain elementary sense, can also be conceived as of "new form". Neither its simple neglect nor its arbitrary creation from the depth of the literary soul, results in real, new vital forms. As a rule, the real renewal takes place by drawing from the innermost layers of the language of the people as well as from the wealth of past vigorous literary periods.

The literary research and critical work of Mehring contributed worthwhile lessons and stimulation to this truly revolutionary task in the field of literature and art.

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American Labor Today--Its Problems and Tasks

(Statement by the National Committee of the Communist Party U. S. A. (Opposition)

The Economic Situation

The economic situation in the United States continues bad. Altho there has been a slight rise in the last three months the business index for the early part of December (about 80) still remains below not only the 1933 peak (100) but even below the 1934 peak (87). In recent months there has been a fairly steady increase in unemployment so that in October 1934 there were over a half million more jobless than in October 1933 (10,850,000 as compared with about 10,250,000.) Indeed, in the month of September 1934 alone, the number of unemployed rose nearly 85,000. According to Federal reports, the number of people dependent on relief during September of this year was five million greater than during the same month a year ago.

Because of re-employment in certain fields and government emergency work, there has been a limited increase in total buying power, amounting to about 20%. But the rapid rise in prices has cancelled all gains in the average worker's income. In 104 industries, including nearly 75% of all industrial workers, the average weekly income, after the rise in the cost of living has been accounted for, amounted to $19.50 in March 1933 and to $19.05 in September 1934. At the same time profits have increased very considerably, tho

unevenly. The net income of 166 larger industrial corporations nearly doubled in the first three-quarters of 1934 as compared with the similar period in 1933. In many cases the rise in profits has been even much greater.

The N. R. A. During the Last Year

In the course of the last year the attitude of the great masses of the population of this country to the N. R. A. has undergone a profound change. The prestige of the Blue Eagle among all sections of the people has fallen steadily and rapidly and a distinct mood of hostility has emerged in many quarters. It is only necessary to recall the universal acclaim that the Johnson ballyhoo met in the early period to realize how pronounced the change of sentiment has been.

In its internal structure and operation the N. R. A. has undergone many changes in the course of last year. Fundamentally it has been subjected to systematic modification in response to the demands of big business, in the course of which a number of features have been eliminated which were once regarded as essential to the recovery measure (price fixing, production control, plant limitation, etc.). In general, The N. R. A. has passed more directly and openly into the control of big business, a fact which is very obviouly reflected in its reorganization.

During this period the labor aspects of the N. R. A. have persistently come to the fore as by far its most important single phase. The establishment of the independent N. I. R. B. in the course of the reorganization of the N. R. A. has given official recognition to this fact. At the same time, the attitude of the N. R. A. to labor and its bearing in labor disputes have undoubtedly become more and more unfriendly in recent times and a hostility has developed to the A. F. of L., in striking contrast to the elaborately friendly relations in the early days of the NRA.

The Labor Movement During The Recent Year

In the course of 1934, certain basic changes in the social structure of the American working class, initiated under the impact of the economic crisis, have become especially noticeable, all contributing to the growing class homogeniety and increased organizational striking power of the workers. The traditional gap between the skilled strata and the unskilled masses has been rapidly closing up. Several factors have contributed in this direction. Unemployment has hit the skilled workers, especially in the construction trades , exceptionally hard and has reduced their standards to those of the unskilled. By leveling down the skilled and semi-skilled differentials, the N. R. A. has operated to the same effect. At the same time, the marked influx of unskilled workers into the A. F. of L. in the last eighteen months has helped greatly to break down the more or less contemptuous attitude with which the skilled workers used to regard the masses of the unskilled whom they considered incapable of organization altogether. In a word, the age-old caste position of the traditional American aristocracy of labor is definitely crumbling and a new class solidarity is beginning to make itself felt.

The problems centering around the existence of masses of foreign workers in the United States are losing significance more rapidly than anyone would have thought possible a decade ago. Not only has immigration been practically at a standstill for a good many years but today there is actually a net surplus emigration from the United States. The division between native-born and foreign-born, which not very long ago was one of the main obstacles in the way of the class unification of the workers, is today rapidly diminishing.

Recent events have also tended to drive together white and colored workers and to narrow somewhat the economic and social chasm that has separated them for so long. Under the stress of unemployment many white workers in the South have been forced to resort to lines of occupation formerly relegated to the Negro as below the dignity of the white, the so-colled "nigger jobs" This has of course worked hardships on many Negroes but at the same time it has helped to break down the economic caste superiority of the white worker. Much more significant than this has, however, been the fact that the traditional discriminatory bars have been largely disregarded, black and white workers fighting and organizing side by side. Even in a number of old established unions a new attitude towards the Negro worker has become increasingly noticeable. All of these trends towards greater class homogeniety of the workers are relatively long-range and permanent and are certain to have profound effect upon the future of the American labor movement.

In the course of the last year, the disillusionment of the workers with the N. R. A., which was only beginning to show itself here and there in the early part of 1930, has become practically universal. Today, all strata of the labor movement, from the rank and file workers in the factories to the very topmost labor officialdom, express definite dissatisfaction with what was once hailed as the "great charter of labor." Among increasing sections of the working class, this dissatisfaction is

being rapidly transformed into an intense and bitter hostility manifesting itself in frequent outbreaks. The denunciation of the company union auto agreement by the A. F. of L. auto workers union is a striking sign of this mood. The lessons of the steel, auto, and textile struggle have not been lost upon the workers.

It is on the background of this constantly mounting disillusionment with and hostility to the N. R. A., that the recent outburst of strike struggle and labor militancy has taken place. The year of 1934 has seen the rise of a strike wave of gigantic proportions; according to present indications, the total number of workers involved in strikes during the year will probably reach 2,000,000. It is in this period too that the San Francisco general strike and the general textile strike took place, both leaving an imperishable record in the history of the American working class. Particularly significant is not only the unexampled militancy with which many of these strikes were fought but also the fact that they were conducted consciously as anti-N. R. A. strikes, that is, as struggles initiated in protest against the fruits of the N. R. A. and in the teeth of the strike-breaking activities on the part of the N. R. A. In general, in this period, labor fought for the same aims as in the previous year—for organization, union recognition and collective bargaining—but this time consciously against the N. R. A. instead of under its banner, as was so common in the latter half of 1933.

The growing militancy of labor has naturally been reflected in a pronounced dissatisfaction with the conservative and antiquated course of the A. F. of L. and a mounting demand for a general overhauling of policies, practices and organizational forms in the direction of greater progressivism. The influx of hundreds of thousands of unskilled workers has naturally intensified this tendency. In many respects this spontaneous progressive movement has already scored notable successes, particularly in the matter of industrial unionism and the organization of the mass production industries. But it must be recognized that this new militancy, this new spirit of progressivism, has not yet proved able to achieve effective organization so as to safeguard its gains and realize its aims. San Francisco, the steel situation and the great textile strike have shown that militancy, fighting spirit and solidarity, even a conscious desire for more aggressive policies, are not enough to assure victory if organized power is not there to challenge the old-established conservative officialdom and assure a leadership in harmony with the new spirit.

One of the most significant developments in the labor movement in recent times has been the definite shift of center of gravity towards the mass unions of unskilled and semi-skilled and away from the organizations of the highly skilled. This has meant, first of all, a shift towards industrial unionism as against craft unionism, and secondly, increasing power in the the councils of the A. F. of L. to the unions of the miners, textile workers and needle trade workers as opposed to the declining craft organizations of the old type. Today the A. F. of L. is no longer the federation of stagnant craft unions in "sheltered" industries it once was. This whole process has greatly stimulated the advance of progessive ideas in the A. F. of L.

The organizational progress of the A. F. of L. has continued during 1934 but not quite as rapidly as during the first months after N. R. A. The leadership of the A. F. of L. and of most of its unions have shown themselves incapable of adapting themselves to the new situation created by the change of relations with the NRA, and of driving ahead to build the labor movement under the new conditions. They have not shown themselves ready to adopt the new and more aggressive methods necessary in the new situation. For the same reasons, there have become noticeable among some sections of the recently organized workers in the steel, auto and textile unions certain signs of depression and demoralization, which can only be overcome by a conscious and effective progressive movement.

Company unionism has been growing uninterruptedly and at an increasing tempo in the course of recent months, largely as a result of the well organized campaign of big business, especially in the heavy industries. The so-called "independent" unions, one the other hand, which was fairly widespread at one time, are now definitely on the decline, some having degenerated into company unions, others having matured into A. F. of L. unions and others having disintegrated altogether. More than ever is it true today that the organized trade union movement in the United States is the American Federation of Labor.

Rising menacingly on the labor horizon at the present time are signs pointing to the reappearance of racketeering in the trade unions. Labor racketeering declined rapidly after 1929 because growing unemployment and the depletion of union treasuries had made the unions slim pickings for the grafters and racketeers. The revival of the trade unions and their increasing financial solvency are now again making them profitable fields and racketeers are already getting their

grip on considerable sections of the trade union movement. As a counsel of desperation there is arising the very dangerous tendency to look to governmental supervision as a safeguard against racketeering.

The mass disillusionment with the N. R. A. and with the New Deal has expressed itself only to a very limited degree in opposition to the Roosevelt administration as such but to that degree it has been manifested in a sentiment for a labor party based on the trade unions. Resolutions urging independent class political action of labor in the form of such a party have been adopted by some important national unions (I. L. G. W. U., A. C. W., U. T. W., etc.) and by a large number of locals and city and state labor bodies. The A. F. of L. officialdom still adheres to the so-called "nonpartisan" policy, which transforms the trade unions into political auxiliaries of the capitalist parties but it is certain that the labor party issue will loom large in the coming period.

Among certain sections of the workers in the newly organized unions, workers very backward and confused in their ideology but in the grip of bitter unrest, the Coughlin movement has been making some headway. In its nature and program this movement is one of the many incipient Fascist tendencies that have arisen under the impact of the crisis; in its ideology especially, is it characteristically Fascist (doctrine of "money slavery;" anti-semite, outlawing of strikes government control of unions and the well-known pseudo-radical demagogy). The peculiar and significant feature of the Coughlin movement is that it has developed a special approach to the trade union movement and has succeeded in winning some support there. In warning against this movement as a grave menace to labor, the A. F. of L. has taken a thoroly correct attitude; unfortunately, however, it has not followed up its resolutions adopted at the 1933 and 1934 conventions with any vigorous action against the Coughlin propaganda.

The 1934 convention of the A. F. of L. in San Francisco reflected, in the distorting mirror of the conservative officialdom, the main tendencies noticeable in the labor movement during the past year. Unprecedented departures from the traditional course of the A. F. of L. had to be permitted by the top leadership under pressure of the widespread tho unorganized sentiment in the ranks. The principle of industrial unionism was officially recognized and a vigorous drive for the organization of the mass production industries along industrial lines and to begin the consolidation of federal unions in the auto and other fields into industrial unions. At the same time, however, the old-line craft union chiefs were assured that their domains would not be invaded. This contradiction and the instability of the whole situation simply means that the convention did not close the question but left it for actual decision to a test of strength in the future. The enlargement of the executive council, bringing with it the first change in the top bureauacracy in many years, came as the inevitable consequence of the shift in basis of the A. F. L. In spite of the conciliatory resolution full of familiar phrases, it is of the utmost significance that hardly a good word was said for the N. R. A. on the floor of the convention and not much more in the report of the executive council. The resentment against it and especially against the elaborate trickery by which Section 7a has been turned into a hollow mockery for the workers, was universally and openly expressed. The broadening of international outlook and solidarity on the part of the A. F. L. was strikingly shown in the powerful demonstration against war and Fascism at the convention. The anti-Red drive so loudly heralded by the executive council on the eve of the convention, completely collapsed at the convention itself. In fact, it was only evoked as a parliamentary trick to prevent the convention from coming to a test vote on the labor party issue, since the A. F. of L. leadership felt that a considerable vote for independent working class political action would greatly damage its standing with the Roosevelt administration in Washington.

The advances of the labor movement reflected in the A. F. of L. convention are many and undeniable but so also are the shortcomings and weaknesses. In spite of all that had happened in the last year, there was no organized progressive force at the San Francisco convention. There were a few more or less progressive delegates from smaller organizations or from federal unions. It was left for the reactionary Lewis to champion the two most important reforms undertaken by the convention. Altho progressive sentiment had increased tremendously in the interval, the organized progressive strength was no greater in San Francisco in 1934 than the year before in Washington.

The Offensive of Capital And The Struggle Over The New N. R. A.

In the first months after the N. R. A. was instituted, labor was definitely on the offensive. It did not take very long, however, before capital mobilized all its forces and opened a counter-attack, which soon turned into an offensive all along the

line. The main objectives in this offensive have been to stem the progress of unionism, to smash unionism wherever it has gained a foothold, to promote company unionism everywhere and to defeat all attempts at genuine collective bargaining. This campaign has been conducted by a variety of means depending on circumstances sometimes partly against the NRA (steel) but more often thru the N. R. A. itself (auto).

At the present time, when the legal life of the N. R. A. is soon coming to a close, the efforts of organized capital are being concentrated on the task of effecting such a revision of it as to remove those provisions which big business has always regarded as hindrances in its way but which were originally accepted either as concessions to labor or as desperate remedies for recovery. As can be seen from the proceedings of the recent Joint Business Conference for Economic Recovery, of the convention of the National Association of Manufacturers and similar gatherings, the aims of big business are: the virtual elimination of the minimum work-week provisions as being too "inflexible," government promotion of company unionism and the banning of the closed shop, and the outlawing of sympathetic or general strikes. As far as company unionism is concerned, the plan is to spread it either in the old way by "safeguarding the right" of the worker to deal with his employer "individually" or thru "whatever organization he chooses" no matter what the majority may say, or also thru the Wolman scheme of "panel unionism" along the lines of the "proportional representation" system in the auto industry.

Under the sponsorship of the government itself in the person of Donald Richberg, whose hostility to labor is as intense as but more effective than was General Johnson's, an organized campaign is being launched to destroy the unions as independent class organizations and to subject them to government strangulation thru either incorporation, regulation, control or other means. Fundamentally this is essentially an attempt to convert the A. F. of L. unions into "government unions" on the Fascist model. "The collective power of the workers associated in labor organizations," declared Mr. Richberg in his address to the National Association of Manufacturers on December 5," "carries with it a responsibility for the protection of the interests of those by whom they are employed. *These moral responsibilities of today will be written down as the legal responsibilities of tomorrow.*" This drive for government supervision represents the control and most menacing aspect of the present offensive of capital against the unions.

What must be labor's N. R. A. program in the face of this menacing offensive of capital allied with the government? In the first place, it must be understood that any effective program must be based on a realistic estimate of the N. R. A., upon a recognition of the fact that labor can get only what it is ready and able to win by fighting, even against the N. R. A., that what is decisive is not the number of seats on the code authorities but rather the organized strength of unionism. Emerging from such an orientation, the program of labor should include the following planks: the 30-hour week; the raising of code minimums to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living and the establishment of special minimums for skilled and semi-skilled grades so as to make impossible the elimination of differentials; the outlawing of company unionism in any form whatever as well as of all attempts to smuggle it in thru "proportional representation" schemes; the safeguarding of the class independence of unionism from government interference.

Within the limits of its originally false orientations to the N. R. A., the new legislative program of the A. F. of L. embodies the most important elements of this program. The program advanced by the Labor Advisory Board of the N. R. A., on the other hand, suffers from some very serious defects since it is completely silent on the key questions of the 30-hour week, company unionism and Section 7a.

The Working Class Political Tendencies In The Labor Movement

The Socialist Party. The labor policy of the S. P. has not changed appreciably since the Militants took control of the party nationally in June 1934. There is still no consistency or uniformity whatever in the course followed by the various S. P. elements in the unions. The extreme right wing elements (Vladeck) are still hopefully striving to achieve recognition as a sort of tolerated poor relation of the conservative anti-Socialist A. F. of L. burocracy. They therefore strictly ban all criticism of the deeds and misdeeds of the labor officialdom and assiduously apply themselves to the congenial occupation of fulsome flattery, bootlicking and red-baiting. The left elements, on the other hand, including Militants and R. P. C.ers, are part of the growing progressive movement in the A. F. of L. unions. How thoroly paralyzed it is on the trade union field can be seen from the lack of independent role that the SP as a party played at recent trade union conventions (A. C. W., I. L. G. W. U., U. T. V., A. F. of L.), in spite of its relative numerical strength. And, to add to the confusion, the remnants of dual unionism, recently

so prevalent among certain sections of the . P. membership, have not yet disappeared.

The Workers Party. (Musteites and Trotskyites). The influence of this new party in the organized labor movement is practically negligible. Its trade union program is worth attention, however, because it is today the only working class political tendency in this country that openly and even eagerly champions dual unionism. It even upbraids the official Communist Party for liquidating its "Red" unions too hastily and mechanically. All this, of course, is only the fitting climax to the weird adventure thru which both the Musteites and Trotskyites have gone in trade union policy in the last six years.

The Communist Party. The last year has been marked by the complete bankruptcy of the dual unionist orientation on which the trade union policy of the C. P. has been based since 1928. The T. U. U. L. unions have virtually disappeared even as paper organizations and the "independent federation of labor" adventure has resulted in an utter fiasco. The isolation of the C. P. from the masses of the organized workers has remained practically as complete as ever. It was on the background of this general situation that the C. P., in response to directives from the C. I. is now undertaking the most significant turn since the initiation of the d u a l i s t i c and s e c t a r i a n course six years ago. Many of the "Red" unions have already been dissolved and others are going thru this process at the present time. Their few members are being sent back into the A. F. of L. organization. Vague disavowals of dual unionism fill the air. As a matter of fact, it is alleged, the C. P .never stood for dual unionism at all; the "Red" union arose out of "special circumstances" and not as the result of a general line. Indeed, if anyone is responsible for dual unionism it is the "Lovestonites" themselves who are now charging the C. P. with their own sins! The expulsion of Zack is the confirmation of this thru the usual method of the scapegoat.

It is necessary to understand very clearly the essential nature and the inherent limitations of this turn. Neither the fundamental dual unionism orientation (the estimation of the conservative unions as really not labor organizations at all) nor the fundamental dual unionist aim (to form rival "Red" unions) is being surrendered or even substantially modified. This can be seen from the fact that there is no definite repudiation of the unashamed dual unionist dogmas of the "third period" days (Lozvosky, Foster, Browder,) nor any clear formulation of the present party viewpoint on these basic questions. This can be seen from the fact that, wherever the dual unions amount to anything, they are being maintained in spite of the new turn. This can be seen, finally, from the Montreal case, where the C. P. and the Industrial Union have bitterly resisted the affiliation of the dress cutters union to the I. L. G. W. U. and have even expelled Comrade Frank Breslow, the manager of this union, for "gross betrayal, that is, for leading the cutters into the Interantional" (Toronto Kamf, December 3, 1934). Indeed, the declaration of the Montreal district buro of the C. P. on the Breslow case unwittingly gives away the real nature of the turn by declaring (Kamf, December 13, 1934): "But this (the new turn) does not mean that the militant unions (i. e., the "Red" unions) should be given up. They are not dual unions as the Lovestonites say." This is substantially the same statement that Ben Gold made at the first Cooper Union meeting in announcing the decision to "give up" the dress department of the Industrial Union.

What is being changed is not fundamental orientation or aim but rather line of strategy. Unless this change of strategy is accompanied by a simultaneous repudiation of the very promises of dual unionism, the new turn is only a retreat in order to make a better leap in order to create a new basis for dual unionism. The fundamental question is not whether dual unions exist at any particular moment or whether they are given up; we have seen from pro-Hitler Germany that it is possible for the C. P. to have an open dual unionist policy and yet not organize a single dual union because conditions made this impossible. The fundamental question is: How are the mass unions regarded—as genuine workers organizations to be defended, built up and improved—or as enemy class organizations to be demoralized from within and disrupted at the proper moment. On this question the C. P. has not changed its attitude in the slightest; it still adheres in principle to the latter viewpoint, even tho, cautioned by Losovsky, it does not "shout it from the housetops."

The C. P. has launched a new trade union offensive on the basis of its recent turn. Quite properly regarding the C. P. O. and the organized progressive movement as the greatest obstacle to the realization of its plans, it is directing its heaviest blows against those organizations in which the progressives have managed to gain a foothold (dressmakers, textile, shoe). With a proper po icy, it should prove possible for the progressives to beat back those attacks and defeat the new union wrecking strategy as the old has been defeated.

It is important to understand that whatever advances the C. P. will make under its new policy—and such advances are quite possible in fields where no progressive movement is to be found—

will, as long as the present basic orientation is maintained, serve as a stimulus to a new outcropping of open union-splitting and dual unionism.

The Work of Our Group

The Communist Party (Opposition) The developments in the labor movement during the last year have completely justified the trade union course of the C. P. O., as against both the conservative officialdom of the A. F. of L. (our N. R. A. orientation and our program of action) and as against the dual uninonism of the C. P. It is no exaggeration to say that, within the limits of our field of activity, our group is the only tendency in the labor movement whose trade union program has stood the test of experience, of actual life and practise.

During the course of the last year we succeeded in bringing our trade union program to large numbers of workers in various industries. We were able to gain a foothold or to consolidate our position in a number of fields—needle trades, textiles, shoe, mining, auto, teachers—and to stimulate the development of a progressive movement in those fields. We were able to demonstrate in more than one place that it is possible for Communists with a correct trade union policy to function as a constructive, responsible and effective union administration. We have established ourselves as a recognized force in the American trade union movement.

Dressmakers Union Local 22, I. L. G. W. U., in which our comrades have leading responsibility, occupies a central position in our trade union work not only because of its tremendous size (30,000) and organizational power, but even more because in recent times it has developed into a recognized model of progressive unionism with a wide reputation and prestige in the American labor movement. In this union our comrades have demonstrated the validity of every aspect of our trade union line: the concentration of progressive forces, the building of an organized progressive movement, the struggles as a constructive force against conservative unionism and dual unionism, the successful administration of a large union as a class conscious organization, the initiation of the most extensive program of workers education ever attempted by the trade union movement of this country, the elevation of the local into an active force in the labor movement as a whole.

In the knitgoods union, consisting of locals of the I. L. G. W. U. and the U. T. W. the success of our line has been as triking as in Local 22, under more difficult circumstances. Here thru the efforts of the progressives, a demoralized and chaotic organization has been cemented into a well-kni and well-disciplined union. In other branches of the needle trades, our comrades have shown the ability to fight with determination against innumerable obstacles to b u i l d up a progressive movement on a sound basis.

In the shoe industry, we have had to operate in a most complicated situation, working in an independent union in such a way as to draw it constantly closer to the organized labor movement nationally, the A. F. of L., at the same time countering the influence of the conservative elements and resisting the disruptive activities of the T. U. U. L. In the Detroit auto field our comrades have been instrumental in stimulating the militancy of the workers and guiding their disillusionment with the N. R. A. into constructive channels as well as in defeating the splitting schemes of the dual unionists. In the mining fields, both anthracite and bituminous, our comrades have fought against the Lewis machine in the face of incredible difficulties and have won important positions in the unions. At the same time they have bitterly resisted the dual unionist adventures emanating from Cappellini and Malone or from the former National Miners Union.

Our comrades and the progressive movement in which they occupy leading positions played a very significant part in a number of important trade union conventions held in recent months (United Shoe and Leather Workers Union, I. L. G. W. U., U. T. W., etc.) In the great textile strike, it was our comrades in Paterson who struck the most militant note during the whole struggle and who raised the only clear voice of protest against the disgraceful Gorman settlement.

Signalizing the emergence of progressivism as a force on a national scale challenging the established order of things in the A. F. of L., is the well-known Green-Zimmerman correspondence which summarizes in authoratative form the conflicting programs of conservatism and progressive unionism. This is a testimonial to the effectiveness of our work in helping to rebuild the progressive movement in the trade unions.

The expansion of our work on the trade union field has exposed a number of a very grave shortcomings in the activities of our group. Chief among these is the limited scope of our work, extending only to a few fields and to certain sections of the country. A major weakness is our failure to coordinate our work in various fields, so that our comrades in different fields often work without effective contact or even knowledge of each other. Finally, and gravest of all, is our failure in some cases to buttress organizationally our ideological advances and the appreciation in some quarters of the vital necessity of organizational

entrenchment and of building a strong and effective progressive movement.

OUR TASKS

In view of this analysis, our immediate tasks are as follows: First, to continue the ideological struggle for our trade union program against conservative unionism, on the one hand, and dual unionism under its most recent aspect, on the other. Secondly, to popularize our program of action for the trade union movement at the present moment, as contained in the Zimmerman letter to Green and in the N. R. A. program outlined above. Third, to break into new fields of trade union work. Fourth, to stimulate effective cooperation with all progressive elements in the trade unions with the ultimate aim of laying the basis for a national progressive movement. Fifth, to concentrate upon the organizational consolidation of our gains and influence.

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For Communist Unity

REPORT ON UNITY NEGOTIATIONS IN ALSACE

Following an exchange of communications, representatives of the Regional Buro of the Communist Party of Alsace (section of the Communist Party of France) met with representatives of the Communist Party Opposition of Alsace in Strasbourg last December.

At this conference, the representatives of the official Party demanded that the Opposition admit that the general line of the C. P. and the Communist International had been 100 per cent correct and that the International Communist Opposition had been wrong, notably, on its estimate of the Social Democracy, on the united front, on the application of opportunist transitional slogans, etc. The Party representatives denied that a change in tactics had taken place. The spokesmen of the Opposition emphasized that any acceptance of old, incorrect resolutions by the C. P. O. was out of the question and cited as example and proof a resolution of the Communist Party of France of March, 1934, in which a united front with the leadership of the Socialist Party of France had been sharply rejected. They further stated that they would insist on the restoration of inner-Party democracy as a pre-requisite for re-unification.

The representatives of the Opposition pointed out that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the concrete proposals for unity and for united action made by C. P. O. in a communication addressed to the official Party. The answer of the Party representatives was that though the C. P. had worked together with the Opposition and would continue to do so in the future, it rejected a united front. The reason given was that the C. P. O. does not represent a mass organization as does the Socialist Party of France and, moreover, claimed to be a part of the Communist movement. A special agreement was therefore necessary. They expressed the hope that all remaining differences would be ironed out in joint struggle and in future discussions conducted in an objective and comradely manner. The Party representatives finally asked the C. P. O. to draw up a statement dealing with the tactical differences still existing between the two organizations.

LETTER FROM THE CPO-ALSACE TO THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE CP-ALSACE

"In line with your request we are giving below a short resume of our position on Hueber's policy since. 1929. As early as 1929, Hueber, Mourer & Co. were treading an incorrect path in utilizing the autonomist mass movement. This was an opportunist step and led to a break with Communist principles. We have emphasized this again and again in the ICO News Bulletin, in Comrade Hirtzel's article, and in other places. We admit that our opposition failed to realize the *principle* differences for a long time. The Party was correct in its fundamental estimate of Hueber. The Party's attitude towards the autonomist mass movement in 1929, however, was tactically false, and it was due to this fact alone that the overwhelming majority of the Party membership in Strasbourg followed Hueber and not the Party leadership. Instead of determining Communist tactics in regard to the autonomist mass move-

ment in a real discussion in close co-operation with the membership and of systematically isolating Hueber by exposing his actions in the Peoples Front coalition, the Party categorically demanded a break with the tactical line previously laid down by the Central Committee to utilize the autonomist movement and placed the expulsion of Hueber and Co. at the forefront. It is no use ignoring these facts since we assume that the Party also has learned from past events.

Now as to the various points raised in our letter of November 7, 1934.

1. We have no fundamental differences with the Party and the C. I.; we accept Communist principles and accept the resolutions of the first four congresses of the C. I. without any reservations; then we are of the opinion that the formulation of the IV world congress on the question of a workers government has proven inadequate in view of subsequent events in Saxony and Thuringia in 1933. On this question we agree with the formulation of our German comrades as expressed in the platform of the CPO.

"The workers and peasants government is not a *transitional slogan*. It is not arrived at in the course of the struggle for power. Its realization is the *final stage* in the struggle for power. The workers and peasants government is neither a parliamentary coalition nor a mere synonym or pseudonym for the proletarian dictatorship. It is a definite stage of the proletarian dictatorship, namely—its beginninng".

The IV World Congress looked upon a coalition government of Social Democrats and Communists as a form of government which could come into existence thru parliamentary victories without a previous armed insurrection. Saxony and Thuringia in 1923 refuted this theory of the IV world congress in practice. The V World Congress without expressly correcting the resolutions of the IV proceded to identify the workers and peasant government with the dictatorship of the proletariat (the purely communist government). This formulation is unclear.

In reference to the VI World Congress and the subsequent ECCI plenums we have raised the following objections:

a. We are opposed to the theory of social-fascism, to the view that the Social Democracy *as a party* has become fascist. This theory denies any difference between bourgeois democracy and fascist dictatorship and its maintenance will always lead to disastrous tactics. The Social Democracy in our opinion is a bourgeois-democratic workers party as experience has shown.

b. We are opposed to the rejection of the united front with reformist organizations, which tactics flow from the theory of social fascism.

c. We are opposed to the formation of new, independent revolutionary trade unions, opposed to the formation of independent organizations in all other fields, such as cultural and sport organizations, and opposed to the surrender of the fight for the re-unification of the trade union movement in countries where it is split, for example, in France.

In other words, we will not ratify resolutions which support the above line—especially now that this course has been liquidated in practice. It follows that the possibility of disagreeing with the tactics of the Party and of fighting for their correction within the Party must be guaranteed. This includes, of course, acceptance of discipline in the execution of such resolutions.

Our tactical differences have narrowed dowr considerably. The remaining differences are:

a. We are of the opinion that a united front agreement must not include a non-agression pact. The basic conditions for a united front are:

1. That full freedom and independence of Communist propaganda be guaranted.
2. That full freedom of Communist criticism of united front actions be guaranteed.
3. That the issues of struggle be submitted to the decision of the workers and organs participating in the struggle.

The C. P. F. has faithfully kept the agreement of the united front pact—being silent when, in our opinion, it should not have been silent. For example, it should have criticised the decision of the Chamber fraction of the S. P. F., to enter a bourgeois government if the latter professes to fight fascism.

b. We are of the opinion that Communists must not come out for *general* democratic demands in the struggle against fascism. Communists do not fight for democratic rights as such—for the bourgeoisie and the Fascists—but only for the democratic rights of the workers, for their extension and for the elimination of democratic rights of the exploiting minority—the bourgeoisie and the fascists—and thus for the overthrow of bourgeoisie democracy by proletarian democracy in the form of a Soviet dictatorship. It therefore follows that the struggle against fascism must not be confined to a struggle within the framework of bourgeois democracy, but must be linked up with the dictatorship of the proletariat and the task of extending the fight against fascism to the struggle for power. Transitional slogans are necessary here (Soviets, workers control of production).

c. In our opinion there must be full clarity on the question of a united party. There can not be unity between reformists and centrists in one party and hence there can not be a united party. There can only be a unified Communist Party based on the principles of Communism. We have met with deviations on this question in quite a few instances.

d. The Party did not succeed in including the strike as a joint weapon of struggle against fascism in the united front pact. In view of subsequent developments the Party ought to propose to the Socialist Party of France—just as the SP of France has made proposals to the Party—to work for the immediate re-establishment of trade union unity, i. e. unity between the CGT (reformist unions) and the CGTU (red trade unions) to fights against the sabotage of the CGT, to fight for affiliation of the trade unions to the united front, and to propagate and prepare for the strike as the most important weapon against fascism and the bourgeoisie.

e. On the question of the formation of a non-partisan, anti-fascist defense organization, the Party ought to take the initiative. We are convinced that these points in no way conflict with the basic tactical line pursued by the Party at present, and with which we are in full agreement.

II. You wish to know what we mean by independent mass activity. We refer you to 17 issues of "Arbeiterpolitik", to our work in the trade unions and sport organizations, to our action in the recent elections as well as to our public meetings. That represents our independent mass policy. To abandon this would mean to abandon Communist activity until the time of re-unification. There were no objections on your part whatsoever to our independent mass activity during the recent elections.

III. We will accept discipline in action, despite differences; we will give up criticism and uphold discipline in the execution of the activities agreed upon by both organizations and the decisions of the joint fractions. Aside from these actions, each organization has the right of mutual criticism.

As members of the Party we are ready to uphold Party discipline binding on all Party members. We pledge ourselves, as does every Party member, to carry out the line of the Party as determined by democratic centralism as well as its decisions in trade unions, in sport organizations, etc., tho there be disagreemnt on individual decisions.

This will clarify the difference between discipline during a bloc of action and Party discipline.

IV. In the event of re-unification, we are ready to merge our organization with the Party, to liquidate it as a faction, and to give up all special rights such as independent mass activity, independent press,, etc. In exchange we demand inner-Party democracy for all members. Inner-Party democracy represents an integral part of democratic centralism.

Since you maintain that the party has always had democratic centralism it becomes necessary to clarify this concept.

What democratic centralism is not:

When Party leaders admit only such members to discussions as limit themselves to criticism on the execution of resolutions and consider tactical decisions and the leadership above criticism.

When Party conferences and world congresses are called whenever the leaders please to call them. (We refer to the fact that from 1919 to 1925 there were five world congresses, from 1925 to 1928 one, and since then none. The same is true of the Party conferences of the most important sections of the C. I. including France.)

When world congresses are arranged in such a way that, as happened at the VI World Congress, the membership and even the leading bodies of the individual parties were permitted to take a stand only after the resolutions had been submitted to them as binding and every reservation concerning their correctness was considered as a break of discipline.

When practical turns are made without the participation of the membership. The difference between burocratic and democratic centralism is that the latter means the control of the leadership thru the membership and its active participation in the working out of the policy of the party, while burocratic centralism precludes this. Real Inner-Party democracy—which is not merely a phrase—is the pre-requisite for centralized execution of Communist policy.

Our idea of inner-Party democracy is exactly the same as that of the Central Committee of the CP of Austria as expressed in its resolution at the last Party conference.

"The Communist Party is built on the principle of democratic centralism, on the principle of *inner democracy* and strict, centralized leadership and *voluntary iron discipline*. Inner democracy means that every party member carries out most actively the functions assigned to him on the basis of division of labor, communicates his experiences and feelings, and takes part in determining the party line and party tactics. Inner democracy involves self-criticism, that is a never-ceasing, living testing in life of the correctness of the party line, a merciless uncovering of the weaknesses and inadequacies of all party organs, a systematic control of the carrying out of decisions adopted. Inner democracy implies the development of the greatest *initiative* of every party member, every

cell, every party committee in the application of the general party directives, in the immediate reaction to everything taking place in their field. Finally, inner-Party democracy implies the most active participation of the entire membership in the formation and election of the leading party cadres as well as the removal of those who have showed themselves not energetic enough, and their replacement by better fitted persons."

It is understood, of course, that inner-Party democracy extends not only to units, but to all organizational forms of the Party from the lowest to the highest, including the Party press. Real political leadership, real strategy and tactics can only be realized thru the lively participation of the Party membership. Only thus can the Party line be transformed into practice with minimum deviations and maximum activity. This is absolutely necessary for a Communist Party since in contrast to the Social Democracy it can realize its aims only in extra-parliamentary activities, thus requiring the active participation of its membership. This is not a demand for the right to quibble and to object, but a question of elementary necessities. The realization of the latter alone will enable the Party to have iron discipline in its ranks—indispensible to victory. We raise the demand for inner-Party democracy not as a formal matter, but in the interest of the Party. The Party must have inner-Party democracy if it is to develop into the genuine vanguard of the revolution.

The existence of democratic centralism forbids that a group within the Party issue its own paper; that a local group issue a paper without the consent of the highest body—assuming, of course, that every leading body is fully aware of the actual needs of the movement—and we need not add that every Party organ is subject to the control of the next highest body.

V. Point five of our letter of November 7th has already been answered by Point 1 of this letter. We emphasize again that in a Party based on democratic centralism we pledge ourselves to carry out even those decisions with which we disagree.

VI. The reason given by your representatives at the conference for rejecting our proposal for the establishment of a joint bloc should reunification not come about in the near future, shows that you are mistaking this bloc for the united front between the CP of France and the SP of France. This bloc is to be permanent and represents close collaboration for carrying out joint *Communist* tasks along the lines of the six points in our letter of November 7th. The contents of these points clearly shows that. In this connection we refer you to the agreement reached by the CP of Germany and the CPG—Opposition.

We have attempted to carry out your request made at the conference in all details. We believe that we have clarified the still existing differences and hope that re-unification will come about in the near future".

Establishment of a Militant Bloc of Action Between the CPO-Alsace and the CP-Alsace

In the beginning of January at a conference of the regional committee of the CPF-Alsace and the CPO-Alsace negotiations were terminated.

One of the representatives of the CPF stated that a number of points mentioned in our letter were acceptable to the Party. Other points, however, showed that there still existed fundamental differences, for example, our estimate of the position of the Party in reference to Hueber and the autonomist mass movement, our stand on the workers government, our estimate of the Social Democracy in which we emphasized that the Social Democracy was a bourgeois-democratic workers party, while the CP regards it now as before as a Social Fascist Party. Therefore, the regional committee would not consent to re-unification, being of the opinion that the whole question could be clarified only internationally with the whole Brandler opposition. The regional committee, however, was of the opinion that there were no objections to the establishment of a bloc of joint action and accepted the proposed six points for co-operation in our letter of November 7, 1934.

A representative of the CPO replied that he had expected the CP to deal more thoroly with the question of re-unification. The representatives of the CP should at least have stated which formulations the regional committee disagreed with and why. Our estimate of the CP had been clearly formulated. If the Party rejected it, then it still stood for Social fascism. However, there is not a word of social fascism in its press and the CP has moreover entered into a pact with these "Social fascists" against fascism and had even accepted a non-aggressive pact. Another representative of the regional committee answered that there were other points in the letter with which he disagreed, citing as an example our proof of the lack of inner-Party democracy as manifested by the failure of the CI to call a world congress. The reason for numerous congresses between 1919 and 1925, he stated, was because the foundation of the CI had to be worked out. Why call a world congress when there is no need for it?

Another representative of the CPO-Alsace said that the CPO was quite aware of the fact that the

differences would not be ironed out in Alsace-Lorraine because these questions are of concern to the CI since its political line is involved. The differences, however, are of a tacital and not a fundamental nature. Normally, they ought, therefore, to be fought out within each single party It was at least to be expected that the regional committee would state its position on these controversial questions. On the question of municipal council elections he agreed with Thorez's article. As a tactical tendency the CPO does not put up independent candidates and will support the Party without, however, giving up the right to present its views and its criticism of the Party even during elections. A representative of the Regional Committee stated in his concluding remarks that the resolutions of the IV, V and VI congresses on the question of a workers government were not contradictory. The opportunist policy of the then existing leadership of the CPG and not the resolutions of the IV congress are to blame for the defeat of 1923. The party's position on the SP has remained the same, despite the united front. The non-appression pact is a concession which was absolutely unavoidable. The slogan of workers control of production is a transitional slogan along the lines laid down in the resolution of the 3 world congress. The CPO poses it today. This slogan, however, can only be applied in a revolutionary situation. The CPF accepts the bloc of joint action. The CPO is to determine the next steps with the Strasbourg leadership. The agreement for a bloc of action between the CPO-Alsace and the CPF-Alsace is based on the following six points:

1. Joint Communist work in the trade unions for the establishment of trade union unity and against reformism.
2. Joint Communist work in the non-partisan sport and cultural organizations.
3. Activization of the work of the unity committee, its propagation and strengthening.
4. Joint action in the Strasbourg municipal council.
5. Joint struggle against the sabotage of the united front and trade union unity of the Hueber party.
6. Preparations for the municipal elections in 1935.

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Marx and Engels on the American Labor Movement

From

"MARX AND AMERICA"

By Bertram Wolfe

"Contempt for Theory"

Although America is the land of most advanced capitalist industry, the American working class, measured in terms of organization and political (i. e. class) consciousness and ideology, is one of the most backward in the capitalist world—dominantly bourgeois-minded, theoretically backward and even dominated by a contempt for theory which makes the development of a revolutionary movement based upon revolutionary theory so much more difficult.

Engels wrote to Sorge on Dec. 31, 1892:

Here in old Europe, things are livlier than in your "youthful" land, which still doesn't seem to want to outgrow its fledgling years. It is noteworthy, but quite natural in a young land, which has never known feudalism and has grown up from the beginning on a bourgeois foundation, that bourgeois prejudices should be so firmly planted in the working class. . . . The American working class imagines that the traditionally inherited bourgeois society is something progressive and su-

perior by its very nature and for all epochs, a non-plus ultra . . . The Americans can struggle and squirm as they will, they cannot discount their surely gigantic future like a bill of exchange; they will have to wait for its due date and precisely because its future is so great, its present must occupy itself principally with the preliminary work for the future, and this work is, as in every young land predominantly material and determines a certain backwardness of thought, a clinging to the traditions connected with the founding of a new nationality.

The roots of American "contempt for theory" lie in the fact that the theories imported from Europe, and distilled from European practice and experience were hopelessly at variance with the practical conditions of this new country, with such different (colonial and pioneer) conditions and such vast extents of free land. Therefore, the gulf between theory and practice, so characteristic of bourgeois thought, is enormously widened in America.

In any land, the masses learn not so much from theory as from experience, and it is the task of the theoretically developed Marxist to further such experience and drive home his theories on the basis of it. But in America and England (England's "contempt for theory" has a somewhat different basis, the fact that it was the first capitalist country and could not learn from the concentrated experience, or theory, of any other land), in England and America, Marx and Engels emphasized, it was especially necessary to realize that the masses could not learn by mere preaching at them from outside their ranks.

On Sept. 16, 1886, Engels wrote to Sorge:

In a country as elemental as America, which has developed in a purely bourgeois fashion without feudal past, but has taken over from England a mass of ideology surviving from the feudal period, such as English common law, religion and sectarianism, and in which the necessity of practical work and of the concentration of capital, has produced a general contempt for all theories, which is only now beginning to disappear in educated and scientific circles—in such a country the people must come to realize their own social interests by making mistake after mistake. Nor will the workers be spared that; the confusion of trade-unions, socialists, Knights of Labor, etc., will continue for some time to come, and they will only learn by injuring themselves. But the chief thing is that they have been set in motion . . .

Class Stratification

One of the principal obstacles to the foundation of a unified working class is the division into skilled and unskilled. In America this has been enormously intensified by the fact that it tended to coincide with the division into native and foreign born.

It appears to me that your great obstacle in America is the privileged position of the native-born worker. Until 1848, a native-born, permanent working class was the exception rather than the rule. The scattered beginnings of the latter in the East and in the cities could still hope to become farmers or members of the bourgeoisie. Such a class has now developed and has organized itself to a large degree in trade-unions. But it still assumes an autocratic position, and leaves (as it may) the ordinary, poorly-paid trades to the immigrants, of whom only a small percentage enter the aristocratic trade-unions. These immigrants are, however, divided into nationalities, which do not understand one another, and for the most part do not understand the language of the country. And your bourgeoisie understands even better than the Austrian government, how to play off one nationality against another . . . (Engels' letter to Schlueter, March 30, 1892.)

Hence Engels insisted on the superior importance of "a real mass movement amongst the English-speaking population," regardless of its elementary character at the beginning, to the formation of a theoretically correct advanced party consisting largely of immigrants. Not that the higher experience, more developed theory and revolutionary traditions of the immigrants were worthless. Quite the contrary, if they did not separate themselves from the native movement, they might serve the vital role of a nucleus which retains theoretical insight into the nature and the course of the entire movement, keeps in progress the process of fermentation and finally again comes to the top.

Class Fluidity

A third peculiarity American Marxists had to reckon with (and with its ideological survivals of "cultural lag" we still have to reckon today) is the lack of class fixity which differentiates America from Europe throughout the nineteenth century. As a result, Marx pointed out, the republic, which in Europe in 1848 was a revolutionary goal, could exist in America in "its conservative form." And in the same passage he adds:

. . . in the United States of America . . . true enough the classes already exist, but have not acquired permanent character, are in constant flux, constantly changing their elements and yielding them up to one another; . . .the modern means of production instead of coinciding with a stagnant

population, rather compensates for the relative scarcity of heads and hands; and, finally . . . the feverishly youthful life of material production, which has so far left neither time nor opportunity to abolish the illusions of old. (*Eighteenth Brumaire*, Kerr & Co., pp. 21-2.)

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The October Revolt in Spain

(REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE IBERIAN COMMUNIST FEDERATION —WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' BLOC)

I. *The Working Class Seeking Unity of Action*

The Spanish Revolution begun in 1930 continues its forward march. The first phase begins in January, 1930, with the fall of the military dictatorship followed by the revolutionary movement of December, and culminates with the establishment of the Republic. The second phase begins with the Republic and ends in October, 1934.

The October days are the beginning of a new phase.

During the first period there is a coalition of working class forces with the petty-bourgeoisie and a considerable section of the bourgeoisie itself against the dictatorship and the monarchy.

During the second period, differences manifest themselves and the working class and the bourgeoisie separate. During the third period begins the open struggle of the proletariat for the conquest of power in order to complete the democratic revolution and to begin the socialist revolution.

The revolt of October should not be considered by itself but in relation to the general course of the revolution.

The Socialist Party with its policy of collaberation from 1931-1933 dealt a heavy blow to the revolutionary movement. It was precisely when the revolutionary enthusiasm was at its highest that the Socialist Party constituted a dam destined to check the overflow of the masses and the development of revolutionary action.

The Socialist Party could have justified its participation in the government if at the attempted coup d'etat of General Sanjurjo in August, 1932, it had made use of its position to take complete power, thus alienating the helpless and bombastic petty bourgeoisie and then with the support of the masses of the working class and peasantry it could have ended the democratic revolution and begun the socialist revolution. Such, however, was not the case. The Socialist Party continued to use Parliament to strangle the revolutionary movement, thus contributing to the further division of the working class.

The reformist policy followed by the Socialist Party did not help the working class but on the contrary helped the bourgeoisie. The Socialist Party had to approve the rise in taxes and the strengthening of the repressive forces of the State —civic guard, guard of assault,etc.—and had to tolerate the assassination of workers and peasants by counter-revolutionary forces. The bourgeois e used the Socialist at that time to enchain the revolutionary movment.

The anarchists almost repeated their errors of 1873 which helped to bring about the liquidation of the first republic. They did not realize that we were undergoing a bourgeois revolution and that we had to achieve democratic transformations. With their program of immediate "Libertarian Communism" they strayed from historical reality and helped the counter-revolution.

The growth of the reaction is due in the first place to the defects of the working class movement itself—mistakes of the Socialist Party and mistakes of the Anarchists.

Nor was the Communist Party of Spain able to understand any better the characteristics of our revolution, led by the false political line which recently again triumphed in the Communist International; it greatly increased the division of the working class; first by trying to create a new trade union movement; then by calling the Socialists and the Anarchists fascists ("social-fascism—anarcho-fascism"); lastly by opposing in practice any real united front.

The only working class party in Spain which, from the very beginning had a correct analysis of the Revolution, was the Iberian Communist

Federation (Workers' and Peasants' Bloc). The Workers' and Peasants' bloc, realizing at the beginning of 1933 the growth of the counter-revolution and the menace of Fascism and convinced that the only way to stop its triumph was by united action of the working class, launched the idea of organizing the Workers' Alliance (Alianza Obrera) which, after the preliminary phase of preparation and propaganda, was definitely crystalized in Catalonia toward the end of 1933 and from there spread through out the whole peninsula.

At the same time as the movement in favor of a united front was progressing in the whole country, a healthy change was fortunately beginning to manifest itself in the Socialist Party. The pressure of the proletarian masses, convinced through painful experience that the reformist tactics of the Party had led them to the brink of disaster, brought about a new orientation in accepting, though incompletely, the united front (Workers' Alliance).

The Anarchists, even after having witnessed that a working class uprising cannot be successful if it is only a single party movement, systematically refused to take part in the united front. It is only in Asturias where the National Conference of Labor had an exact understanding of what its revolutionary duties were, that it broke with the Anarchists sectarianism and joined the Workers' Alliance in time.

The official Communist Party after having been a relentless enemy of the Workers' Alliance to which it proposed the so-called "united front from below", rectified its position and declared itself in favor of the Workers' Alliance just when an important change was occurring in the policy of the International as a result of the new international policy of the U. S. S. R.

The general favorable turn toward the united front had important revolutionary manifestations in the months preceding the October insurrection.

These mass movements which became increasingly larger and more intense, clearly showed that the proletariat had found the correct road to victory. The unification of the working class forces was being carried out at a much more rapid pace than that of the forces of the counter-revolutionaries. The reaction took this into consideration and decided, without loss of time, to attack the working class movement in order to paralyze this rapid convergence of its forces. "A few more weeks and we will be lost," thought the counter-revolution.

The counter-revolution during the month of September took a series of steps destined to block the rising of the working class movement—measures which were definitely provocative; the closing of the House of the Republic in Madrid, the arrest of many militant workers, the discovery of ammunition storehouses, etc. The declaration of a state of alarm was the preface to the struggle desired by the reaction.

The Samper government resigned the first of October when Gil Robles, the leader of the counter revolution, refused his cooperation.

The new government with three representatives of the Cedaa (the party of Gil Robles) was an act of defiance to the working class and the announcement of a thorough offensive against all revolutionary forces. The Lerroux-Gil Robles government took over power with a very definite aim: to destroy the whole organized labor movement by the use of forec, to break the unity of action of the proletariat, to liquidate all the democratic victories, and by means of all the repressive machinery of the state to give the Fascists time to organize so that power might be turned over to them at the opportune moment. The Lerroux-Gil Robles government of Spain was to play the same role historically as the Von Papen government in Germany—i. e. to prepare the way for Fascism. After the government headed by Lerrox would come another led by Gil Robles who, having muzzled the working class, could then commence the building of the corporate state. Such were the projects of the counter-revolution.

II

The Insurrection

The labor movement was forced into a difficult battle before it was able to complete the consolidation of its forces. The coming of the counter-revolution into power could not take place without a relentless fight on the part of the working class. Germany and Austria had shown the Spanish proletariat that it is better to retreat fighting than to leave the field free to the enemy. More by instinct than by national coordination (which was unfortunately non-existent) the Spanish proletariat, not in its entirety however, understood on the 3rd and 4th of October that it was necessary to declare a general strike to thwart the plans of the counter-revolution.

The general strike could have been a simple movement of protest, a mobilization of the masses put on guard, or a general revolutionary strike of an insurrectionary character.

The strike was of the latter type in Asturias and in Catalonia. In the rest of the country, except in the unimportant instances, the strike was not insurrectionary.

In Asturias the general strike of Friday the

5th immediately changed into revolutionary action. Asturias was the one region in Spain where the Workers Alliance embraced all working class organizations. The Socialist Party, the General Union of Workers (U. G. T.), the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc (Iberian Communist Federation), the National Confederation of Labor (C. N. T.), the Left Communist (Trotsky) group and, just the day before the insurrection the Communist Party of Spain—all participated. The Asturian proletariat was the first in all Spain to achieve complete unity of action. That is why it was an irresistible, forward-marching force.

From the 6th on, the workers of Asturias were the absolute masters of the situation. The state machinery *collapsed* like a house of cards, the workers in revolt were able to arm themselves sufficiently. Immediately the proletariat with admirable creative spirit began to organize the political and economic life of the country. Asturias became the heroic vanguard of the Spanish social revolution.

Nevertheless, the glorious Asturian *Commune* could not survive unless the rest of the Spanish proletariat followed its example.

After two weeks of resistance, of incomparable heroism, the workers of Asturias had to retreat. They were momentarily beaten but not vanquished.

Undoubtedly the *Commune* of Asturias constitutes a point of departure of incalculable value for the future labor movement of Spain. Marx showed that the beginning of the German labor movement was the revolt of the Silesian weavers in 1844. Th insurrection of the Asturian miners in 1934, is a sign of a new stage in the history of our social struggle?

Closely allied to the Asturian movement was the uprising of the proletariat to the north of the province of Leon and in certain sections of the province of Viscaya (Eibar, Mondragon, etc.) but it was put down because of its limited character and often only local action.

In Madrid, the proletariat declared a general strike from the 5th to the 13th. Frequent armed conflicts between the revolutionary centers and the state forces occurred, but the strike movement never reached the revolutionary stage.

In the rest of Spain—except Asturias and Catalonia—the general strike was far from being unanimous and complete. There was no strike in a great number of important cities, and in some places it occurred only when the circumstances were already strategically favorable to the government.

III

The Insurrcetion in Catalonia

The insurrectionary action in Catalonia had special characteristics because of the converging of the working class and of the petty-bourgeois government of the Generalitat.

It is in Catalonia, as we have already indicated above, that the Workers' Alliance was born, thanks to the correct policy of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc.

The Workers' Alliance included the Workers' and Peansants' Block (Iberian Communist Federation), the Catalonian Socialist Federation (Socialist Party), the General Union of Workers, the Opposition Unions, the Communist Left (Trotskyite), the Unions outside of the National Confederation of Labor, the Libertarian Syndicalist Federation, and from the 4th of October on, the official Communist Party.

The Workers' Alliance h a d indisputible strength, but it was still far from realizing unity of action of the majority of the working class. Outside of the Workers' Alliance were: the National Confederation of Labor (Iberian Anarchist Federation), which though inarticulate possesses undeniabile influence especially in a section of the proletariat of Barcelona rather than in the rest of the province; the Socialist Union of Catalonia which had previously separated itself from the Workers' Alliance to form a bloc with the petty-bourgeois in the government of the Generalitat, and finally, the Peasant Organization controlled and led by the Catalonian Left.

The revoluutionary forces in Catalonia were at that time:

a. The parties and trade union organizations which formed the Workers' Alliance.
b. The National Confederation of Labor (Iberian Anarchist Federation).
c. The Peasant Organization.
d. The Generalitat. (The government of Catalonia).

The Generalitat, petty-bourgeois government found itself in a dilemma; either it joined the revolutionary movement of the working class against the Fascist reaction, or it would be defeated along with the labor movement.

The objective of the Lerroux-Gil Robles government was not only the destruction of the working class movement but the absolute centralization of power; to reduce Catalonian autonomy to a simple administrative office as well as the annulment of the law of the Contracts of Culture, a law which linked the peasants to the Catalonian Left.

The proletariat and the democratic victories of the Revolution coincided.

The convergence of the government of the Gen-

eralitat and of the Workers' Alliance came about through the interplay of revolutionary circumstances. There never existed, however, an organic coordination between the Generalitat and the Workers Alliance. The Generalitat would not unite its action with that of the Workers' Alliance. The petty-bourgeoisie of the Generalitat understood that once the movement was started it might not be able to hold it within convenient bounds.

After much hestitation the Generalitat influenced by the pressure of the working masses decided to revolt against the Lerroux-Gil Robles government which had just been organized in Madrid. This decision of the Catalonian Left resulted in the participation of the peasants in the movement.

The revolutionary front was thrown together without having any form: the proletariat, the peasant, and the petty-bourgeoisie seeking national independence for Catalonia.

There was a proletarian sector missing, the Anarchists of the C. N. T. (National Confederation of Labor) who when invited by the Workers' Alliance to participate in the general strike of the 5th refused to cooperate.

The relation of forces, in spite of the defection of the anarchists, was extraordinarily favorable to the revolution. The Generalitat, government of Catalonia, had great quantities of armaments. Two thousand police and militiamen armed, constituted a wall of steel, and at their side a very large proletariat and all the peasants impatient to enter the fight. The battle could not have been lost without the treachery of one of the participants in this revolutionary front.

In the midst of the revolutionary battle the panic of the petty-bourgeoisie increased at the growth of the movement and its possible results. They understood that in the end the proletariat would have the upper hand.

The Generalitat refused to arm the Workers' Alliance. Dencas, Minister of the Interior of the Generalitat, gave as a pretext the lack of arms, which was absolutely untrue. Dencas himself ordered the automobiles of the Workers' Alliance to be fired on, saying that they were Fascist autos. The Committee of the Workers' Alliance was almost shot down on the nights of the 6th and 7th of October by a Dencas group.

The Catalonian Left not only refused to arm the workers but also refused to utilize its own machinery of force against the very weak army of the Lerroux-Gil Robles government at Barcelona. About four hundred soldiers triumphed over two thousand armed police and six thousand armed militiamen on the streets of Bareclona, who offered no resistance. The Generalitat gave up without trying either the offensive or the defensive. The hysterical pleas by radio did more to dishearten the workers than to encourage them. The Generalitat in capitulating, betrayed the revolution. the working class movement, the peasants, and Catalonia.

One can apply to the Catalonian Left what Marx said of the German petty-bourgeoisie which also betrayed the revolution: "This is its most unpardonable act. Never has any party in History so betrayed its best allies and itself, and whatever humiliation and punishment is reserved for this section of the middle class, this act alone justifies it."

IV

Critical Analysis

The result of the October revolution shows that the moment was not objectively favorable to the triumph of the revolution. The Workers' and Peasants' Bloc in discussions with the Socialist Party had at several different times pointed out the dangers of a premature insurrection. The Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, nevertheless, was always in the front line of combat.

The objective and subjective conditions necessary for a successful working class revolution have been indicated by Lenin: "It is not enough to have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class; it is *also necessary to have disposed* of the actually active forces in *all* classes in society without exception so that when the final struggle comes, the forces of the hostile classes will be confused, discordant among thmeselves, and weakened by disruptive internal conflict; secondly, that all the intermediary, hesitating, unconscious elements, i. e., the petty-bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democracy will have been thoroughly exposed and disgraced by their political failures; thirdly, that there commence to form within the proletariat and extending to the masses, a change of opinion in favor of bolder, more decisive revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie. That will be the time, if we have correctly analyzed the conditions indicated and briefly sketched above, if we have correctly chosen the moment, our victory will be assured."

Different revolutionary experiences in different countries have confirmed these conditions so that they may be considered classic.

Did these conditions exist in Spain in September and October?

Working class unity of action was not yet completely realized. The Anarchists of the C. N. T. and of the F. A. I which influenced about half of

the working class movement in our country were missing.

There was no revolutionary labor party that had the general sympathy of the majority of the working class. The Socialist Party which had just made such serious blunders had only begun to rectify its line. The Communist Party modified its tactics a few minutes before the revolutionary explosion. The Iberian Communist Federation (Workers' and Peasants' Bloc) had no real effective strength except in Catalonia.

The situation in which the bourgeoisie found itself, though very serious was not desperate as it still had resources. The majority of the population did not believe that the government crisis was insoluble.

The Socialist Party in always holding the movement back from unity had helped to keep it immature in a revolutionary sense. The Socialist Party opposed the national organization of the Workers Allliance which would have coordinated revolutionary action.

The official Communist Party in implacably criticising the Workers' Alliance and the organizations that belonged to it *up to the very eve of revolutionary action*, was also an abstacle.

The position of the Anarchists (C. N. T.) in opposing unity action was another important difficulty.

The peasants did not collaborate with the revolutionary action, except in Catalonia, because the Socialist Party had lead an unsuccessful strike last June. That is why the peasants would not join the proletarian revolution.

In spite of these unfavorable objective and subjective conditions, the revolutionary movement could have succeeded (a) with the active participation of the Catalonian Generalitat; (b) with revolutionary action of the working class of Madrid, strongly organized and center of the working class movement of all Spain up to that time; (c) with insurrection in Asturias.

If the Generalitat had wanted to win and not to lose, *if* it had attacked, the working class movement and the Generalitat would have been victorious in Catalonia. The victory of the revolution in Catalonia would have called for insurrection in the provinces of Valencia, Alicante, Castellon, etc. And if the working class of Madrid had participated even though it would not have been victorious at the start, victory would have been finally assured by the successes of Asturias and Catalonia.

The great sustaining strength was in the Generalitat. The position of the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc was to defend that policy in the Workers Alliance which would have lead the Generalitat to a rupture with the central government by placing it in an inexorable dilemma: revolution on the side of the working class, or counter-revolution.

Another important fact which is to be considered in an analysis of tactics and strategy is that Madrid, lacking a large proletarian mass, cannot be the center of insurrectionary action.

The defection of the Anarchists, their systematic refusal to take part in the revolutionary struggle was a crime that will not be easily pardoned by the working class. The Anarchists — except those who naturally participated in Asturias and certain centers of Catalonia—were an important aid to the counter-revolution. The treachery of the Generalitat in a certain measure is less than that of the Anarchists, for the Generalitat was composed of petty bourgeoisie while the Anarchists were workers.

V.

Historical Importance

The results of the October Revolution cannot be compared in so far as perspectives are concerned was either the Paris *Commune* of 1871 or 1905 in Russia. In 1871 and 1905 the revolution was defeated. Our revolution underwent a defeat in one of its encounters but the war goes on. A defeat in one battle does not mean that the whole war is lost.

The October events may be compared historically to the July days of 1917 in Russia and even to December, 1930, in Spain.

In July, 1917, the Russian proletariat had an armed demonstration which one of the leading parties of the working class wanted to convert into an insurrection for the taking of power. The proletariat was vanquished giving rise to the ferocious persecution of the Kerensky Government against the revolutionary proletariat. Four months later the conquered of July were the conquerors of October. The proletariat had taken power.

In December, 1930, during the fight against dictatorship and the monarchy, the Spanish revolutionary movement was forced to retreat; the monarchy was victorious. Four months later however the monarchy collapsed and the Republic was set up.

The Spanish revolution is taking place in Spain with the Spanish working class against the Spanish reactionary forces. It is impossible to forget the historical facts and influences that exist today in our own country.

From this point of view, the October events offer a certain parallel to those of 1909 and 1917 which must be taken into account.

In 1909 the Catalonian proletariat arose against the reactionary government of Madrid. The uprising was suppressed. But shortly afterwards due to great mass pressure of the labor masses, the government was overthrown and a relatively democratic period began followed by considerable strengthening of the labor movement.

In 1917 revolutionary action was also put down but the labor movement developed in unheard of fashion as a result of the revolutionary intervention. The Socialist Party and syndicalism grew considerably from 1917 on.

Growth and strengthening of the labor movement has followed in our country every mass action of a revolutionary nature.

This gives us sufficient cause to believe that the working class movement will come out of the October Revolution strengthened and with revolutionary experience which will be of *supreme* value to it. A defeat is often necessary in order to have a decisive victory. Without the Paris Commune the Russian Revolution of 1905 would not have been possible. And without the revolution of 1905 (Lenin himself said it) victory would not have been possible in 1917. "A defeat in a hard fought battle has the same revolutionary importance as an easily obtained victory." (Marx)

During the last two years there have been in the international labor movement three classic examples each of symbolic value, Germany, Austria, and Spain.

In Germany the working class because of errors of its leaders, impassably watched the development of Fascism, without being able to get unity of action at first, nor entering the combat later on to defeat Fascism. Hitler was able to triumph because the working class did not struggle against him.

In Asturia the preletariat struggled but it was too late. The revolutionary action of February, 1934, should have taken place before then, before Fascism had organized as it already had done by February, 1934. Nevertheless the fact that the Asturian proletriat did not capitulate as the proletariat had in Germany, kept it from feeling vanquished and helped it to react quickly so that one can already see on the horizon future struggles of the Asturian workers against Fascism.

To perish without a struggle is to die. To be defeated in combat is a momentary retreat to rehabilitate one's forces and to strike again.

The Spanish proletariat, educated by the tragic realities of Germany and Austria knew enough, fortunately, to react in time. It struggled against Fascism before Fascism had a chance to organize and penetrate into the labor movement.

The October battles shook not only the foundations of the Lerroux-Gil Robles government but those of the existing order. The newly born Fascist movement after the formidable pressure of the proletariat far, from gaining in strength, finds itself deeply undermined.

The Spanish proletariat has not only shown that Fascism will not triumph over it, but that on the contrary it will inevitably climb over the cadavre of Fascism.

The Trade Union Work of The Communist Party of Germany

It will be the task of the Seventh World Congress to examine the work of the various Communist parties since 1929, to determine and correct the errors made in the decisions of the VI World Congress and in their actual application; finally, to work out new tasks based on past experience. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany has, therefore, invited "Social Democrats, Christian workers and trade unionists of all tendencies" to submit discussion articles on "all questions that agitate the working class and the Party." We welcome this and herewith contribute our article as trade unionists of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition). We hope that we, too, will be given the opportunity of presenting our viewpoint at the VII World Congress orally and in detail.

Imposing a Dual Unionist Policy

The Sixth World Congress made no decision on trade union work. However, the change in trade union tactics as resolved by the Fourth *Red* International of Labor Unions (Profintern) Congress was approved. Directives for trade union work were worked out and passed by a "joint session of the R. I. L. U. fraction and the German delegation to the VI Congress." Actually these di-

rectives were regarded as resolutions of the VI World Congress, although the statutes of the Communist International do not recognize any such body of the Congress. The decisions of the Fourth R. I. L. U. Congress and the trade union directives resolved upon by the R. I. L. U. fraction and the German delegation to the VI World Congress introduced a change in tactics inasmuch as they shifted the emphasis of trade union work from the winning of the members of reformist trade unions to the winning of the revolutionary *un*organized workers. It was decided to form an "independent revolutionary trade union center," (R. G. O.), "revolutionary unions," "red trade union councils," "revolutionary strike leaderships." Trade union unity was to be effected by strengthening the "revolutionary unions" and by weakening the reformist unions. The Fifth Profintern Congress went further:

"Destroy the traitors. Get every factory, evary branch, every shop to join the Unity Leagues in closed ranks."

In accordance with the decisions of the V. R. I. L. U. Congress this was the slogan issued by the Communist Party of Germany in October 1930 after the betrayal of the Berlin metal workers' strike by the reformists. This represented a conscious turn in the trade union tactics previously pursued by the Communist International. These (unrevised) tactics were characterized by the principle of adhering firmly to the winning of the reformist trade unions, of recognizing the statutes of the trade unions in the interest of Communist fractions, of subjecting only the Communist trade union fractions and not the trade unions to Party discipline, of refusing to lead economic strikes "independently" with out a n d against the unions.

Comrade Stalin had thus subtly posed the problem in 1928:

"A situation in which it would be necessary to build parallel mass organizations of the working class against the will of the bureaucracy which has sold out to the capitalists is entirely conceivable. Such a situation already exists in America. It is entirely possible that in Germany, too, events will favor such a course."

Lessons of History

We denied this possibility in 1928. We had twice had very disasterous experiences with "independent revolutionary unions" in Germany. In 1919, at the founding of the Communist Party of Germany, the majority of the delegates voted aginst the central leadership of the Spartacus League and for the formation of revolutionary unions and for leaving the reformist unions. The attempt failed. Millions of unorganized workers entered the independent unions. The new miners' union which had the greatest influx disintegrated because it was no more capable of fighting than the free miners' union under reformist leadership. The liquidation of this false trade union policy resulted in a split of the Spartacus League, though we were fully supported by the Communist International and enjoyed Lenin's personal aid. In his pamphlet, "Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder" Lenin proved, on the basis of international and Russian experiences, that all experiments with "revolutionary unions" had brought nothing but harm to the Communist parties.

In 1924, after the October defeat, a second attempt was made by the Ruth Fischer-Maslow leadership to experiment with ultra-left trade union tactics. With the aid of the Executive Committee of the Communist International they were finally liquidated in 1925. The letter of the ECCI then stated among other things:

"The ultra-left union line and the united front from below policy of the Ruth Fischer-Maslow leadership have brought the Party to the brink of disaster."

It was these sad experiences that motivated us to oppose the resolutions of the IV R. I. L. U. Congress and enabled us to foresee that this third attempt would be more disastrous than the first two. Six years of the trade union policy initiated by the IV R. I. L. U. Congress and approved by the VI World Congress have confirmed our views.

The Fourth Congress of the R. I. L. U.

The turn of the IV R. I. L. U. Congress was based on the "changed situation" due to the "fusion of the reformists with the bourgeois state and the increasingly treacherous role of the Social Fascists". This conclusion was bound up with the Theses of the VI World Congress to the effect that in the " third period" a "revolutionary upsurge of the masses" was a thing of the near future. Paragraph 16 of the Theses of the IV R. I. L. U. Congress states:

"The international proletariat *cannot wait* until the Amsterdam International decides for unity ....Consequently, the members of the R. I. L. U. must unite the masses without the cooperation....of the reformist leaders."

Paragraph 11 says:

"Thus the united front from below comes to the fore....The main thing is to remember that the stronger the revolutionary unions and minorities the more quickly will unity be realized."

Here the united front and trade union unity

are being confused. United front actions are *temporary* alliances in which joint actions are agreed upon on definite issues. Trade union unity means *permanent* cooperation in trade union work. The alleged "inability of the international proletariat to wait for trade union unity" is nothing but the "revolutionary impatience" of the authors of these trade union directives, as the past six years have shown. This view and the confusion of united front actions with trade union unity must be recognized as a mistake and must be corrected.

The resolutions of the IV and V R. I. L. U. Congress and the VI World Congress of the Communist International pledge the Communists to work in fractions in the trade unions. In this respect there were no formal corrections of the previous trade union policy of the Communist International. However, the Communist fractions were given the task of forming revolutionary unions as dual organizations in order to destroy the reformist trade unions. This false task was not carried out effectively by a single Communist Party. Complaint on this flooded all the sessions of the Communist International and the R. I. L. U. since 1928. Comrade Piatnitsky repeated this complaint in his last speech at the Communist fraction in the R. I. L. U. He said:

"The main reason is that the Communist Parties do not know how to apply these resolutions to the different conditions of each country."

Comrade Piatnitsky is mistaken. The cause of the isolation of the Communist Parties from the reformist unions and their practical inability to organize and lead "independent economic struggles" is not to be found in the false application of the decisions of the IV and V R. I. L. U. Congresses. On the contrary, the very attempt to carry out these decisions makes all Communist work in the trade unions impossible. The mass of trade unionists felt that this strategy was aimed at the destruction of their organizations. The trade union bureaucracy easily isolated the Communists as enemies of the trade unions and thus made their work impossible. Even the "revolutionary unorganized workers" were not won over en masse in a single European country. The independent red unions had no power of attraction because they lacked the ability to furnish a better "independent" leadership of trade union struggles.

Comrade W. in No. 56 of the "Rundschau" (German Inprecor) of October 5, 1934 made the following attempts at justification in a polemic against Aufhauser: "The Red Union Center was organized during a time of sharpening class struggles, a capitalistic offensive and the fascisation of the trade union leaders. This center took the form of a firmer alliance between the trade union opposition and the unorganized workers in order to lead the struggles for the interest of the workers against the class collaboration policies of the leadership of the Trade Union Federation. The Berlin Transport Strike proves the correctness of the Red Trade Union Opposition policy in the struggle against fascism."

Comrade W. further notes that "despite our correct slogans, our tactics are not always such as to win the masses" and comes to the following conclusion:

"The Red Trade Union Opposition and the red unions are the only trade union organizations which have not coordinated and have upheld the banner of trade union struggle."

Collapse of the New Trade Union Line

Comrade W., however, writes in the same article:

"We Communists stand for trade union unity and for the direct rebuilding of independent trade unions. It is, therefore, understood that wherever united trade union groups emerge *the Red Trade Union Opposition and the red trade unions would give up their organizations.*"

In others words, here is an organization with correct policies, issuing correct slogans, continuing to wage the trade union struggle against the Nazi regime as the only organization, yet, it is ready to give up its existence. Comrade W. is trying to convert the Red Trade Union Opposition into a sort of traditional companion of the revolutionary class struggle. Whom is he trying to fool? It is characteristic of the Red Trade Union Opposition and the red unions that they were unable to mobilize the masses despite their acceptance of revolutionary class struggle. The Red Trade Union Opposition and the "independent strike leaders" had little to lead. Neither the organized workers nor the "revolutionary unorganized workers" trusted their leadership. The few stuggles which were organized through tremendous efforts of the Red Trade Union Opposition almost always led to defeats. Between wanting to and being able to there was an unbridgeable gap.

The "revolutionary unorganized workers" recognized the good will of the Communist Party of Germany and the Red Trade Union Opposition and showed their appreciation by voting for "red factory councils" and for Communist candidates in the Reichstag elections. The hatred against the Socialist Party of Germany assumed intense forms. But it was an impotent hatred. It was not able to break the sabotage of the reformists.

The Communist could not mobilize the organized and unorganized workers, because they lacked the organs through which they could have executed their policy—namely, Communist fractions in the mass organizations controlled by reformists. The will of the masses to fight was not organized in an opposition to the reformist leaders. The policy of the Red Trade Union Opposition did not separate the masses still under reformist influence from their reformist leaders but rather from the Communist Party of Germany. This led to the great disappointment among the masses which made the Communist Party practically incapable of any opposition. This made it easier for the Socialist Party of Germany to adhere to its policy of toleration. Finally, it made it easier for fascism to win the disappointed workers.

The Red Trade Union Opposition proved that the Socialist Party of Germany and the reformist trade union bureaucracy did not want to fight. But that was a well-known fact to most of the organized workers in the reformist unions. The Red Trade Union Opposition, however, did not succeed in proving in practise that the Communists despite the crisis and sabotage of the Social Democracy, knew better than the reformist leaders how to mobilize the masses, to organize and lead them in the struggle against wage reductions and relief funds, against the capitalist offensive and growing fascism.

The decision of the VI World Congress which forbade Communists "to propagate the transition slogan; 'workers' control over production' in a non-revolutionary situation" robbed the Communist Party of Germany of the only means of linking up the partial struggles with the revolutionary slogans in a concrete fashion. To the reformist fake slogans of industrial democracy, class collaboration and the toleration and coalition policy, the Communist Party of Germany could only oppose the necessity of partial struggles, without realizing these since it lacked the forces. Besides, the ultimate slogans of the Communist Party were very unreal to the masses because they could not anywhere see the possibility of achieving them. A section of the masses and the Communist Party leaders became dizzy with success at the elections and underestimated the danger of fascism. The victory of fascism took them by complete surprise.

To the German experience we may add the experiences of other countries. In France and in Czechoslovakia the revolutionary unions which split from the reformists in 1920 had the majority. These countries afforded the best possible ground for testing the "independent revolutionary unions." The experiences in these countries were similar to the German experiences. The Comfederation General du Travail Unitaire (Red Trade Union Center) is today a minority in France. The reformist Confederation Generale du Travail which in 1920 did not have half the membership of the C. G. T. U. has today double the membership of the C. G. T. U. The "independent" revolutionary unions of Czechoslovakia have been dissolved; the remaining weak unions being of no consequence. The C. G. T. U. in France and the Communist Party of France are today fighting a tough battle for the re-unification of the C. G. T. U. with the C. G. T. and request only one condition—inner-union democracy. In No. 49 of the "Rundschau" August 9, 1934, Comrade P. C. Coenen issued the following official slogan immediately following the lost textile workers' strike in Verviers:

"Do not leave your trade union in righteous anger against the betrayers Buchane and Co. On the contrary, try to win the union leadership in order to transform your trade unions into mighty class weapons against the capitalists class. Defend more than ever trade union unity and oppose every attempt at a trade union split."

This slogan is almost word for word the same as the one we issued in Germany in 1928 and in the year following. Had such a trade union policy been applied in Germany during the past six years, the Communist Party of Germany would have had a decisive influence in the German unions. Furthermore, it would have been strong enough to destroy the toleration policy of the Socialist Party of Germany and trade union burocracy and could have mobilized and led the masses against the capitalist offensive and growing fascism. No one can say today definitely that had such a correct trade union and united policy been applied in Germany the mobilized masses would have successfully staged an insurrection without suffering any reverses and would have established a Soviet Germany. But we do not doubt for a moment that with such Communist tactics the influence of the Socialist Party of Germany and the trade union burocracy would have been decidedly weakened and the struggle against fascism would have left a much deeper impression than did the struggles of the Spanish and Austrian workers.

Where the Sixth World Congress Erred

The tactics accepted at the VI World Congress called for an attack when the fortresses of the enemy were not yet in a condition to be attacked. As a result, systematic preparation in the trade unions and in the other proletarian mass organizations was neglected. The working class became impotent and thus facilitated the victory of fascism.

These grave errors must be recognized, otherwise they cannot be rectified.

The aim of the Red Trade Union Opposition was to defeat the reformist trade union bureaucracy through the organization of the "revolutionary unorganized." Lozovsky wrote in the directives for the Red Trade Union Opposition Cenference in Berlin 1929 as follows:

"The experiences of Lodz taught us that the admission of representatives of reformist unions into the strike committee spelled the begining of defeat. Therefore, all efforts must be made to prevent the strike committe from being influenced by the Social Democracy and the trade union bureaucracy. No *official representative of the reformist unions whatsoever can be admitted to a strike committee.*"

"Red trade union opposition must not be concerned with the winning of unorganized workers for the reformist unions during a strike."

In the trade union commission of the Comintern Lozovsky said:

"If we want to carry out an independent leadership of economic struggles and if we want to appear with our own list in the fastories we must be ready to face mass expulsion and strike."

Lozovsky was right. The trade union resolutions of the IV and V. R. I. L. U. Congresses could and did have no other results. The German trade union bureaucracy and Social Democracy warmly welcomed these missteps of Lozovsky. They facilitated the elimination of Communist influence in the reformist trade unions. Lozovsky thought that this into the bargain would be a means of rapidly winning over the unorganized and of overcoming the reformist influence. This proved to be a fatal error. Today, this no longer admits of controversy. The facts tell a bitter tale.

When the Communist Party of Germany on July 20, 1932, on the occasion of the dismissal of Severing, and on January 30, 1933, when Hitler assumed power, made united front proposals to the leadership of the Socialist Party of Germany and the General Federation of Labor for a general strike, the reformist leaders could reject this offer very easily as an "insincere maneuver" because these proposals were in sharp contrast with the trade union and united front policies pursued by the Communist Party of Germany for years. The rank and file of the Communist Party of Germany failed to understand the bureaucratic turns. The majority of Party members was not able to carry out either July 20, 1932, or January 30, 1933 "from below" proposals made from on top by the leadership of the German Communist Party. The Party was completely isolated from the masses influenced by the Social Democracy. There was a great deal of militancy in the reformist unions, the sport and cultural organizations in the Reichsbanner. But the Communist Party of Germany lacked every possibility of organizing and leading these militant workers against the bureaucracy which was sabotaging. These were the consequences of the attempt to carry out the instructions of Lozovsky.

An Honest Break with Past Errors Imperative

It is impossible to uphold these instructions, to say that they are correct and to be willing at the same time to liquidate the Red Trade Union Center and the red unions, to unite the C. G. T. U. with the C. G. T. on the basis of inner-union democracy and to carry out the following instructions passed at the Party conference in Austria:

"Every Communist must actively participate in the building of trade unions without attempting to subordinate the union to the Party or to dictate to the unions. Communists must agitate for the slogans of the Party in the unions, but they must not assume that leadership is theirs from the outset. Those who have won the confidence of their fellow-workers will be leaders in the trade unions."

Resolutions which experience has shown to be false must be scrapped. On the basis of past experience it must be made clear to the broad masses and the Party membership why they were false. Lack of clarity makes the formation of illegal trade unions in Germany and the execution of a new united front and trade union policy in all countries more difficult.

Such lack of clarity can be found in the directives for the formation of illegal unions published by the illegal press service of the Communist Party of Germany, No. 24, July 21, 1934. The adjusted break with the old Red Trade Union Opposition policy led to the careless adoption of the slogan "trade union unity" in Germany just because in France this slogan is an essential and justified part of the new united front policy. In Germany, however, at present, there do not exist various trade unions which are to be united. In place of the free unions smashed by fascism new illegal unions including all tendencies in the labor movement must be built on a non-participating basis. That is the task confronting us in Germany. The red unions don't have to be united, or as the appeal of the Communist Party of Germany states, liquidated in the interest of new illegal class trade unions. They were smashed by fascism just as all the others. We must liquidate not the red unions but the Red Trade Union Opposition ideology which is still rampant among Par-

ty members and obstructing the formation of illegal class unions on a non-partisan basis because of its sectarianism.

More Dangerous Mistakes in Germany

The instructions of the Party are drawn from a plan for the formation of independent industrial leagues which the authors have modeled on the organizational form of the "German Labor Front". This patterning is looked upon by them as an advantage. On page 13 they state:

"This facilitates the organization of an opposition in the German Labor Front (D. A. F.) and enables us to utilize the fractions and blocs of the former to conceal the groups and functionaries of the independent industrial league."

There are two gross errors involved here. First of all, the D. A. F. is not and never has been, not even before the decree of October 5th, an industrial organization which made organized opposition work possible, work aiming to detach units to be brought into the illegal trade unions, as the article by Heckert in the C. I. magazine states. The decree of October 24th which forbids the D. A. F. to concern itself with wages or working conditions has existed in the unions since they were coordinated. The leadership of the Communist Party of Germany was given the erroneous impression by the demagogic agitation of the Nazis who at first tried to stamp the Labor Front with a trade union character. In the fascist mass organizations of Hitler-Germany opposition work is impossible; *these organizations must be smashed.* This latter activity is very important and necessary and can be coordinated with illegal trade union work. However, this is work of a different nature and should as a rule be done by different persons than those who are working to build illegal unions.

In order to keep the illegal trade union work secret as the instructions conclude, we must first create such work. In order to create such work, the fascist D. A. F., parading as the offspring of the trade unions, must be exposed and mercilessly branded as a non-union organization, as an organization formed to paralyze the interests of the workers. *Voluntary membership* and functioning in these fascist organizations must be branded as a betrayal of labor. The Austrian Communist Party and even the Austrian Socialist Party pursued correct tactics when they branded and exposed from the very beginning the members of the clerico-fascist unions. In this way they prevented the Austrian fascist unions from taking over and coordinating the great mass of former reformist unions.

In Germany the trade unions were successfully coordinated by the fascists without any resistance on the part of the Socialist Party and unfortunately also on the part of the Communist Party. One of the major reasons for this was the Red Trade Union Opposition policy which rejected the tactics of winning over the membership of the reformist trade unions during the legal times and was thus robbed of any influence. The slogan issued by the Communist Party in February, 1933, at the very moment of Hitler's seizure of power to enter the "unions in order to save them" was meaningless, because it came five years too late. This slogan facilitated the maneuvres of the tens of thousands of trade union members which manifested itself in their refusal to pay dues was disorganized instead of organized.

If we demand under the pretense of concealing the illegal unions that workers become active members in the D. A. F. or the N. S. B. O. (National Socialist Factory Organization), we are merely creating danger and confusion. These instructions made it difficult to differentiate renegade from revolutionary and constitute a great obstacle to the rebuilding of unions. The false impression is hereby created among the broad masses of workers that it is possible to transform fascist organizations (through fraction work as in legal periods) into class organizations. Fascist organizations cannot be won over as reformist; they must be smashed as a part of the fascist state apparatus. In the D. A. F. and all other fascist organizations functionaries are not elected but chosen by the leader. Even the lowest functionary must so "conceal" his revolutionary views that practically nothing remains of them. All this hinders the formation of new illegal unions. For disruptive work in the D. A. F., even for the purpose of gathering information about the members of the D. A. F. concerning their usefulness for the illegal class trade unions, only specially selected educated firm revolutionaries can be chosen.

Therefore, it is a mistake to urge the broad masses, (as is done in the General Directives for Trade Union Work) to become active members in the D. A. F. Voluntary membership and activity in the fascist mass organizations must be forbidden and exposed. The disruptive work must be organized in a conspirational manner and must be separated from illegal trade union work. The confusion of both these necessary tasks hinders their development.

Confusion and Bureaucratism Block the Way

On page 8 we find the following in connection with a few correct instructions:

"The organizational committee should be composed of workers of different trade union and political tendencies, i. e., it should be built on the basis

of a united front."

The first part of the sentence is correct, the second false. Here we find a confusion of united front and trade union unity which we had already criticised in the resolutions of the IV R. I. L. U. Congress of 1928. The formation of illegal unions is not possible on the basis of a united front. A united front means that various political tendencies fight *temporarily, at times,* for common partial aims. In the trade unions various tendencies work *permanently* for the trade union aims of the working class.

A further error in the formation is the bureaucratic establishment of a plan for industrial leagues from which are deduced the tasks for the formation of illegal unions, schematically and not concretely. Tasks which should only be realized when the illegal trade unions are fully matured are being posed now. This error is especially evident in the instructions for the formation of central papers. They demand schematically:

"That in Berlin the paper of the independent metal workers union, in Halle-Merseburg the paper of the independent chemical workers' union, in Chemitz the paper of the independent textile workers' union, in Hamburg the paper of the international Seamen and Longshoremen union, tc. appear as mass organs."

These bureaucratic orders from on top can be very obstructive. An illegal paper is, in the beginning, the most important and often the only organizational link among the members of the illegal unions. Paying for the paper with an additional tax is the first form in which contributions are made. To start with central factory papers in the formation of illegal unions is to start the building with the chimney instead of the foundation. Such central industrial league papers can be published bureaucratically, if there is superfluous money. At best they can serve the general propaganda for the building of illegal unions. In this case there would be hardly any distinction between these and other illegal papers. General propaganda is not sufficient for the formation of illegal unions. The best trade union papers are published by workers who, besides being ready to make heroic sacrifices possess the necessary knowledge and information in order to root the papers in the factories and among the unemployed. This they can do only if they are capable of ferreting out every opportunity to organize successfully the workers in their daily struggles. Only those trade union papers which reflect rareful, persistent activities will become organs of the illegal unions Through the exchange of the best local papers between the various connecting centers the best local papers will become central papers. No bureaucracy can tell today which is the place where a central paper has the necessary basis, even though it is known that certain industries are situated here or there.

The organization of an information service on the actual events in the factories and at the relief bureaus is the most important pre-requisite for the formation of illegal unions and the getting out of useful trade union papers. Only if the existing small cadre groups are thoroughly informed of the real sentiments and events in the factories and among the unemployed, can they do such work and thereby gain the confidence of the broad masses at present intimidated. Only thus can they carry on their activities successfully.

Another serious shortcoming of the instructions of the Communist Party of Germany for the formation of illegal class unions consists in the fact that they do not give concrete instructions as to the position of the trade unions on the new and special forms of organizing economic struggles. The new policy of winning over old trade union members in contrast to the former policy of the Red Trade Union Opposition, while failing to point out the new tasks and new forms of trade union work, shows that there is an appalling lack of clarity which might prove dangerous. It is by no means certain that the trade unionists of legal times are able to cope with the problems of illegal unions.

The question of the organization and execution of a strike under the illegal conditions of the fascist dictatorship have brought all of us face to face with new problems. The question of the mobilization of masses has to be solved anew. Mass meetings and mass votes are hardly possible. The question of support for the strike and the problem of the duration of the strike are of prime importance. The question of self-defense of the strikers during the strike assumes first-rate significance. The questions of passive resistance, of the seizure of factories, of sabotage, must be considered all over again. These questions cannot be answered by bureaucratic decrees; the answers must be found through tireless, persistent work from below. A central leading body for the generalizion of local experiences is absolutely necessary. But it can bear fruit only if from the very beginning every trace of bureaucracy, of schematic, i. e. thoughtless, work is eliminated. Therefore, illegal work for the building of class unions must be so organized that the new forms of the trade union struggle are collectively found.

We are working together with C. P. G. comrades for the formation of illegal unions in a number of districts. This was true even before the

turn. After the Comintern's legal sanction of this cooperation a few leading functionaries of the C. P. G. in Berlin attempted to utilize these negotiations in order to exclude us. The attempt failed. The C. P. G. comrades were convinced that the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) has far more contacts in the trade unions and factories than the Communist Party. We did not get these contacts as a gift but as a result of hard work. We were able to get them because we did not participate in the deviations of the Communist Party and advocated a line before Hitler's seizure of power to which the line of the Communist International and Communist Party of Germany today correspond approximately. This facilitates cooperation and tends to eliminate friction. Whatever we can do on our part to further united actions will be done. The decisions of the VII World Congress will be of tremendous significance. They can either promote considerably the formation of illegal unions by eliminating old mistakes or they can hamper the work by mixing the new and old tactics for reasons of prestige. We hope that the first will happen. We will do everything in our power to facilitate the organization of the German working class for victory over fascism.

Trade union work is one of the most important tasks facing us.

Communist Party U. S. A.--Opposition--Calls for Unity of Labor

JOIN COMMUNIST OPPOSITION

To All Members of the Communist Party! To All Communist Sympathizers! To All Workers!

The Fourth National Conference of the Communist Party (Opposition) ended on New Year's Day. It was an event of no small moment in the development of the American labor movement, especially of the revolutionary forces, the Communist ranks.

Delegates from the hard and soft coal fields, from the textile centers, from the garment factories, from the shoe plants, from the metal and machine shops, from the fields of class battle from Los Angeles to New York, reported on the struggles of the American working people in recent months. The problems and tasks facing labor in the United States, and the world-over were approached objectively, in a healthy, critical spirit, in the light of the revolutionary scientific teachings of Marx and Lenin.

It was inspiring to learn how the Communist Party (Opposition), despite its poverty of forces and paucity of funds, was able to lend leadership to workers and to mobilize them against the employers and the government under the banner of the N. R. A. It was particularly instructive to learn of the growing effectiveness of our members and ever-growing number of sympathizers in their struggle against the reactionary, and often corrupt, trade union officialdom. It was most encouraging for us to be able to register our marked progress in defeating the destructive dual-unionist drives of the official Communist Party and thus not only save the name of Communism from being discredited in the eyes of thousands of striking workers but also to get these masses to move left and to enhance the influence and prestige of Communism as the only force which spells hope and shows the way out for the exploited and oppressed in the world-shaking crisis.

Communist Party Opposition Forges Ahead

More than that. The year behind us, was a year in which despite all mistakes and shortcomings, many of which have been costly, we extended and consolidated our Communist position and influence. The number of recruits we have won, (especially those with great influence in the ranks of organized labor) the notable progress of the New Workers School, as the outstanding center of Marxist-Leninist education in the country, our clarification and solution of burning issues confronting the world Communist and labor movements, our successful struggle against Trotskyism and centrism, our strengthened determinination to fight for the reconstruction and unification of the American and international Communist movements—all of these will surely serve as a great stimulus to an improvement and intensification of our own work, to an even firmer welding of the solidarity of our sympathizers and workers, fighting shoulder to shoulder with us, against capital-

ist reaction and its rising tide of war and fascism.

But we do not rest here. We have made only a beginning. More unified than ever, more clear in our tactics and objectives, more experienced and determined, thru years on the firing line of the workers against the bosses and their agents, we, with more effective organization and steeled morale, now appeal to the workers to close their ranks and fight harder than ever against hunger and war, against misery and fascist reaction.

Unity in Fight Against Hunger and War

Our call for unity in the revolutionary labor movement goes out especially to our comrades in the Communist Party. How long will you, comrades of the Communist Party, allow the American and international Communist movements to be broken in pieces by the stifling system of inner party life and leadership and by the sectarianism paralyzing our party in the face of countless opportunities for growth and influence? Comrades, our convention has reaffirmed our devotion to Communist unity and our determination to hasten its realization. Let not our appeal fall on deaf ears! Let us learn, even from our most disastrous defeats, as well as victories. Let not the tragedy of Germany be repeated eleswhere, even in a limited form. Let us fight together for a return to the tactics of the first Four Congresses of the Comintern under he leadership of Lenin—to the tactics of the united front, to the strategy of fighting for the transformation of the trade unions into militant agencies of working class struggle. Let us join hands for unity in the revolutionary movement, for Communist unity, as the first step towards unity of the working class.

To the members of the Socialist Party we say: Comrades, it is high time that you break with the false principles of reformism, which have brought incalculable damage to the German and Austrian working classes and to the world proletariat.

Brothers and sisters in the labor unions! We are with you as one, for a fight for decent conditions, for clean and militant unionism.

Toilers on the land and in the mills, in the mines and in the factories! These are critical and decisive hours. Under the flag of the N. R. A. and the New Deal the ruling class of this country is strengthening the grip of trusts and is preparing new heavy blows against us all, preparing to lower our standards of living and to deny us even the right to organize and strike.

What we need most, today, is unity of action—militant united action by the oppressed and exploited Negro workers, by the impoverished farmers, by the workers in the cities—against their common enemy—the boss class, the rulers of industry and agriculture, the owners of the government.

Rally to the Communist Party (Opposition)

The Communist Party (Opposition) is that section of the Communist movement which resolutely adheres to the principles of world Communism, the principles enunciated by Marx and Lenin, the principles on which the Soviet Union is founded and in which Socialism, a classless society free from all exploitation, is now being constructed. We stand for tactics rooted in the soil of American conditions and the best of American revolutionary traditions as well as the experience of our comrades and brothers in other countries.

We ask you to fight side by side with us. We ask you to join our organization. We urge you to take place in our ranks, as members, to help us hasten the unity and rebuilding of the Communist and revolutionary movements, to speed up and insure the unity of the exploited against the exploiters and the victory of a new, a Socialist, day in the United States.

Our convention keynote and message to the workers is:

Forward to unity against capitalist reaction and imperialist war.

Forward to solidarity with the U. S. S. R.—the Socialist fatherland of the working class of the world!

Forward to a victorious working class!

COMMUNIST PARTY U. S. A. (Opposition)